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March 1983
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DOSSIER

WHAT'S WRONG WITH COMICS?

It started with an innocent reader inquiry—something like: "Why don't you meatballs review more comics, eh?" Instantly, the nose-thumbing response, "Because they stink," word-ballooned over my head. Nasty, perhaps, but I'm afraid truthful. The line of thought vectored by my wagging fingers—tracing the why of the knee-jerk Bronx cheer—brought me to the question at the top of this page, and then to the genesis of this section.

The ugly fact is, I used to like comics—and as recently as five years ago regularly bought and read a good dozen of them every month. But then something happened. Nothing cataclysmic—just the slow realization that I hadn't the least desire to read any of the flimsy things still mysteriously accumulating on my bathroom's to-be-consumed rack. Buying comics had become pointlessly habitual, and whatever rewards I used to get, had almost totally withered away.

That something essential had gone Missing In Action was obvious. As someone who enjoyed comics more as an adult (if you call college-age adult) than as a child, something as simple as growing out of them didn't make much sense. As with rockmusic, I'd learned to grow back *into* comics after allowing teenage snobbish intolerance to reject them as worthless, immature kiddie shit. It was a one-two combo punch that did me in. First, the late-sixties flowering of underground comix opened up whole new sub-basements of perverse preoccupations never before hinted at comic-wise (drugs, sex—you know). Following closely was the early/mid-seventies' imposition of raw, energetic talent into the flagging mainstream assembly-lines (marked by the appearance of books like the Thomas/Smith *Conan*, Wrightson's *Swamp Thing*, Kaluta's *Shadow*, Gerber and Colan's *Howard the Duck*, Starlin's *Warlock*, and Englehart and Brunner's *Dr Strange*), giving all of us a brief moment of self-deluding optimism that, dammit, though compromised, mainstream books did allow room for innovation.

But the mindless Berserker mentality of the Big Comics Machine made short work of that. It wasn't so much a matter of The Business chewing these young turks up and spitting them out, but more as if these guys were a bunch of rubber dinghies capsizing in the wake of a lumbering, automated super-tanker, blind to the devastating effect it's having. The twin ravages of irreversible industry momentum and premature deification by a newly-ascendant fandom, served to freeze these nascent talents in the larval stages of their development. Comics almost grew up in the seventies. It got a couple of steps into a precocious post-adolescence before it was institutionalized, and then (like Frances Farmer), sedated, gang-banged, and lobotomized into submission.

Unlike the bad-guys in the moronically simplified stories they tell, there are no real villains in the "Who Killed Comics" saga. The culprits are a vast, unconvened conspiracy of almost everyone involved—readers/fans who trowel unqualified praise on artists desperately needing critical honesty; style-deaf writers who confuse hyperbolic excess with real, craft-generated excitement and wield the English language with less finesse than a drunken Cimmerian performing a circumcision with a broadsword; star-struck, exploitation-ripe young artists whose total knowledge of anatomy derives from Neal Adams or John Buscema swipe files; cynical old hacks over-skilled in the practice of artistic anonymity; dull-witted, easily panicked publishers more interested in engineering cross-media merchandising schemes than in nurturing sure new talent (and raw material for future C-MMS's) is encouraged and developed—and so on.

That we're desperately in need of a new Comic Renaissance shouldn't be shocking news to anyone. The American comic book is poised on the brink of oblivion, and somehow I feel like standing by and yelling, "Jump!"

Am I a chorus of one? I wasn't sure and undertook the survey that follows as a way of justifying my malcontent and maybe finding some encouraging words. I asked a wide spectrum of comic readers, fans, professionals, and critics to tell me what they thought was wrong with comics, in one hundred words. Following is the first batch of responses, with more to come next month. Of course, you too are invited to add your two cents. Who knows, something you say might just cheer me up.

—Lou Stathis

What's wrong with comics? Nothing! What could be wrong with a medium that has survived centuries of providing mass-audience education and entertainment? What's wrong with being the "television" of the twenties, a vehicle for protest in the sixties, and the forefunner (and idea source) for cinema in this decade? What, after all, is wrong with an easily exploitable print medium that can disseminate mindless escape and masturbatory fantasy? Are comics to blame if they employ brilliant artwork and lavish printing to tell shallow stories by those concerned only with their value as a money machine? Nothing is wrong with comics! Comics are a valid and unique literary form. They are a training ground for the growing practice of sequential art. They can and will (I hope) deliver classical works of lasting value in our lifetime. THANK GOD NO ONE ASKED ME WHAT'S WRONG WITH COMIC BOOK ARTISTS, WRITERS, AND PUBLISHERS!

—Will Eisner

Traditionally, in the comics' fairlands, the best harvests have come from artists who were members of "creative families." These families, like sunshine, encouraged growth in seedling artists and provided a climate where perennial artists could mature.

Many great comic book farms—like the fifties EC/*Mad* gardens, and the sixties Marvel Comics growers—have proven the soundness of the agro-fam-

Will Eisner, creator of the Spirit, is universally acknowledged to be one of comics' greatest artist/storytellers.

Dan Steffan is a cartoonist and illustrator whose work has appeared in *H.M. Dope Comix, Amazing SF* and *Galaxy* magazines.

Kim Thompson is the editor of *Amazing Heroes* Magazine.

Ted White, former *H.M* editor, was a comic fan and critic long before anyone knew there were such things.

lly. They knew that if they gave their crops the necessary nutrients, the fruit produced would be ripe and bountiful. Unfortunately, today's Agro-Comic conglomerates have abandoned the cultivation of the perennial in favor of the profits to be made from this year's crop of unripened saplings. Today's farmers have forgotten that if they keep harvesting the same garden without revitalizing the soil, it will become barren and produce nothing of consequence.

—Dan Steffan

Superman strangled American comics in the crib, condemning them to an eternity of adolescent power fantasies. When the original energy of the concept withered, it was simply recycled again and again. There were alternatives: Barks, Ibis, Kurtzman. But, as the wide base of the general readership was eroded, replaced by the dictatorship of the "fan cult" (whose adolescent tastes embraced the superhero with unholy enthusiasm), all alternatives died. Pretentious writing and flashy art attempted in vain to camouflage the stench of the rotting superman—a stench to which only the fans are impervious. The American comic book is a zombie. And the world laughs at it.

—Kim Thompson

Over twenty years ago Stan Lee introduced a fresh idea to the stale, post-EC, superhero comics: soap opera. Spider-Man couldn't get dates. The Fantastic Four continually quarreled. Although the early stories were usually complete in each issue, they dovetailed into on-going epics. It was a revolutionary idea that revitalized a second-rate company and gave the folks at Superman the first competition they'd had in years.

Today's comics consist of interminable episodes of never-ending epics, written by former fans who never learned how to tell concise stories. And only superhero comics are left, giving the field a single, narrow, self-indulgent focus.

—Ted White

Some forty years ago, the newsstands were abundantly filled with comics of all varieties. Today, there are fewer than five flavors of

COMIC JUSTICE/ POETIC RELIEF

Allen Ginsberg's "A Supermarket in California" as cartooned by Dave Morice from Poetry Comics.

Although you may wish you had a copy of **Dave Morice's** new book of **Poetry Comics** (Simon & Schuster) back when you were struggling through English 101, you could still conceivably enjoy his witty, and often ironic, comic illustrations of everything from Donne and Shakespeare to Stephen Crane—even if the originals left you cold. If you haven't had the opportunity to grapple with your first poetry survey course yet, this book could spare you a lot of suffering.

But Morice's book is no mere oversized illustrated *Cliff Notes*. His purpose is specifically to "abuse the muse!" Morice has been publishing *Poetry Comics Magazine* out of his Iowa City home since 1978, but this collection raises classic poetry to a new level of high colloquialism. Stylized language is the perfect stuff for cartoons—it makes them funnier. Cartoon stylistics are applied with poetic justice, and often dealt out with great irony: for instance, in illustrating Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," perhaps the greatest example of disillusionment in all literature, with "SMILE" faces—the woe-begone knight-at-arms and unsinging birds all have round heads, dots for eyes, and a turned-up half circle for a mouth! Or making over Ben Jonson's "To Celia" ("Drink to me only with thine eyes"), Robert Herrick's "To the Virgins" ("Gather ye rosebuds while ye may."), and an Emily Dickinson short despair, in the image of True Life Romance comics.

Sometimes, the poems are laden with images of modernity that give their semi-archaic language new relevance—like illustrating Keats's "When I Have Fears" with a patient on a shrink's couch, and naming the shrink "Dr. Byron Lord." Then there are moderns that are ultra-modern. Composer/theorist John Cage's "Empty Words" includes eleven empty frames. Allen Ginsberg's "A Supermarket in California" is already a comic strip—it merely needed to be filled in.

It's relieving to know that there's still a sensibility out there—Morice's—that places poetry and comics at equal ends of one spectrum of imagination. Though this collection may not appeal to poetry purists, those are exactly the ones who need it.

—Merle Ginsberg

Robert Greenberger edits *Comics Scene* Magazine.

John Workman is an artist whose work has appeared in *HM*, *Star Reach*, and the *National Lampoon*. He's also been *HM*'s Art Director for the past five years.

Mary Wilshire, a NYC based freelance illustrator, has published work in *HM*, *National Lampoon*, *Cracked*, *Wet Satin*, *Young Lust*, *Aftershock*, upcoming in *Wimmen's Comix* and an issue of Marvel's *Red Sonja*.

WHAT TH-
THERE AIN'T NOTHIN' WRONG WIT' COMICS! THEY'RE JUST LIKE WRITIN' A NOVEL OR PAINTIN' A PICTURE— ONE GUY WIT' SOME INK 'N' PAPER, CREATIN' GREAT STUFF!
INDEED, THAT IS THE WAY IT SHOULD BE... BUT TODAY'S COMICS ARE THE RESULT OF CREATION BY COMMITTEE. NO LONGER IS ONE VISIONARY CREATOR IN CONTROL. THERE ARE TOO MANY PUBLISHERS AND EDITORS AND VICE PRESIDENTS IN CHARGE OF NOSE-PICKING PUTTING IN THEIR TWO CENTS' WORTH!
OH, YEAH?
YEAH! WHY, COMICS ARE ALMOST AS MESSED UP AS GOLF ON TELEVISION!

(WITH THANKS TO KENNY) —JOHN WORKMAN/82

four-color excitement being published. One might think, with the growth of comic shops and alternative presses, we would be inundated with spies, gunfighters, lovers, air aces, and funny animals—perhaps even some serious, mainstream stories about the drama of real life. No chance. Instead of variety, we're being treated to mostly more of the same—science fiction and super heroes—and none of it terribly well done. Much of it is terrible. There is great potential for expansion if the handful of distributors don't strangle the outlets for what innovative material is being published. Quite simply, this is the critical period for the graphic medium. And hopefully, we will see a new age in comics, one characterized by a greater variety of ideas, a greater number of publishers, and perhaps the greatest ever wealth of creativity.

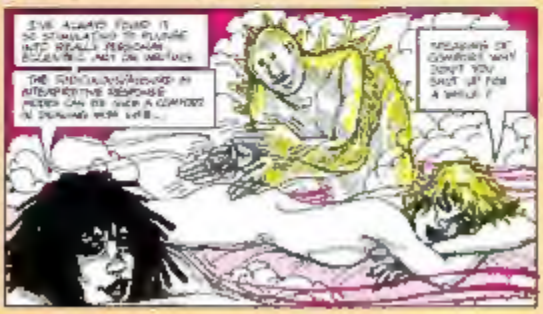
—Robert Greenberger

The essential problem with comics today is simple: comics are too cheap. A cheaply made, cheaply sold item is neither respected nor respectable in a modern society such as ours. For how many years

COMIC OPERA

TWENTIETH CENTURY STUFF?
YEAH, THE EARTH INTERNATIONAL ORDER. IN THE UNITED STATES ALL ARTS FOUGHT TO SURVIVE ECONOMIC DEPRESSION. LONG HOWARDS CAME AND WENT. SYNDICATES BOUGHT TAME MATERIAL AND SCREENED THOSE ARTISTS...
YET A LOT OF WONDERFUL WORK CAME OUT ANYWAY.

THERE WAS STILL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN COMIC ARTISTS AND OVERLOOKED IN MAINSTREAM MEDIA FOR THE VALUE OF A WIDE RANGE OF UNCONVENTIONAL STYLES.
AND WOMEN SUPER HEROES WEREN'T SWITCHED TO FLAT SHOES YET.


I'VE ALWAYS FOUND IT SO STIMULATING TO EXPLORE INTO REALLY PERSONAL BUSINESS AND ON WHATNOT.
THE SUBCONSCIOUSNESS IN INTERPRETIVE RESPONSE MEDIA CAN BE SUCH A COMFORT IN DEALING WITH LIFE...
MEANWHILE BY COMICS! WHY DON'T YOU SHUT UP FOR A WHILE?

Walter Simonson is a pretty fair comic book artist. He's drawn *Alien: The Illustrated Story* and "Shakespeare for Americans" for *HM*, "Manhunter" for DC, and recently completed *Starslammers*, an upcoming Marvel Graphic Novel.

Byron Preiss, head honcho of Byron Preiss Visual Publications, Inc., is responsible for such volumes as *The Dinosaurs*, *Dragonworld*, *The Secret*, and *The Illustrated Harlan Ellison*.

Rod Kierkegaard, Jr. inflicts monthly doses of "Rock Opera"—world's longest running comic serial—on *HM* readers. He claims to be writing a novel.

was the phrase "Made in Japan" used to denote shabby merchandise? But today the miraculous products of Japanese initiative are the expensive wonders of the Western world. A person's self-respect, his very ego are invested in a purchase along with his money. And the more he spends, the less he can afford to think he's being taken for a fool.

The answer is simple. Raise prices. Outrageously. The self-esteem of our customers demands it.

The coffee tables of America are waiting.

—Walt Simonson

What's wrong with comics? Display. The network of small comic shops around the country have heroically established a base for alternative comics publishers like Pacific and First. Nonetheless, it is rare to find graphic story work in major bookshops around America; just the opposite of the situation in Europe. What is needed, for better or worse right now, is a "category" section other than "humor" in which graphic story material might be displayed. This is, unfortunately, where some of our books and some of Marvel's early trade paperbacks were placed. With the acceptance of Jim Starlin's Marvel Graphic Novel and Denning's *Elfquest* editions, we may finally be seeing some changes.

—Byron Preiss

What's wrong with comic art in this country? I think the saddest current trend reflects the increasing homogeneity of our popular culture in general—the disappearance of specialized products for diverse individual tastes. In today's world of comics the numbers may be as big as ever, but the content is often the same old garbage recycled in a different wrapper. Maybe this is what the readership truly wants: comic-strip spin-offs of video games and book tie-ins to mass-market movie hits, but it needs to be pointed out that syndicated "Pac-Man" strips and Marvel versions of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* aren't necessarily art—they're advertising. This is a process which cheats both the reader and the artist. Most cartoonists I know are artists of terrific integrity who labor with a great deal of personal frustration; many of them would leap at the opportunity to attempt something new, to take chances. Unfortunately, it seems less and less likely they'll be getting the opportunity any time soon.

—Rod Kierkegaard, Jr.

Imagine written literature locked into one or two genres (detective novels and cookbooks, say). Imagine John Updike or Eudora Welty spurned by publishers because they are unable to couch their viewpoints in terms of whodunits or horseradish. Would the reading public rebel at the loss and demand depth, variety, and relevance to common life? One would hope so. But we can't draw much encouragement from a comics readership dominated by

"The editors of *A Smithsonian Book of Comic-Book Comics* have allowed a prejudice towards a certain type of story to throw this promising collection out of whack."

INSTITUTIONALIZED

Choosing the best thirty-three stories from the "Golden Age" of comic books (1938-1954) isn't an easy task, considering the thousands upon thousands that were produced during those lusty years. You'd expect the big names to be represented—Superman, Batman, Plastic Man, Donald Duck, Pogo, Captain Marvel—and they are. You'd also expect work by the form's most inventive artists—like Eisner, Wolverton, Barks, Kurtzman, Wood—and that's here, too. All in color. Sounds as though ***A Smithsonian Book of Comic-Book Comics*** (Smithsonian Institution Press/Harry N. Abrams) has covered all the bases, doesn't it? But editors **Mike Barrier** and **Martin Williams** have allowed a prejudice towards a certain kind of story throw the promising collection out of whack, leaving the reader plenty of room for Monday morning quarterbacking.

Now, no one would argue that humor hasn't played an important part in the development of the American comic book. Maybe it's even the single most important genre. Certainly the *Little Lulu* stories by John Stanley, *The Spirit* by Will Eisner, Carl Barks's *Donald Duck* and Walt Kelly's *Pogo* are among the peak achievements in the history of the form. So, who can complain that the above four represent a full third of this collection's three-hundred-plus pages?

The problem lies with the rest of the book. There are five *Scribbly* stories, four *Jingle Jangles*, and two forgettable gag strips by Wolverton. Mad is represented by a couple of its famous pre-code parodies—already reprinted several times. The two Plastic Man stories are also available in reprint form, as are the Superman story from *Action #1*, the Kurtzman war stories from *Two-Fisted Tales*, and Krigstein's "Master Race" from EC's *Impact*. None of these are bad stories, just unimaginative and unnecessary choices.

Why not a Superman story we haven't seen? A horror or SF piece by Wolverton, a genuine warped genius. And where is Archie? Captain America? How about a Western? Or something by John Severin, Joe Maneely, Bob Powell, Joe Kubert, or dozens of others who made their mark on this popular art form? How about something with a little *funk* in it?

No single volume can represent *everything* that's interesting about comic book history, but this one goes a bit overboard on familiar favorites, funny animals and cute kids. Is it worth the $20 asking price? Sure. Could it have been done a hell of a lot better? You bet. Will there be a follow-up? One can only hope.

—Michael S. Barson

JUGHEAD GOES PUNK

It finally happened! **Jughead**'s thrown away that silly old cap, gotten a Mohawk haircut and some punk-rock duds, and joined the "punk scene" at Riverdale High (Jughead #327, February 1983). And I thought Reggie would be the first on their block! Oh, and don't call him Jughead any more—his new handle is "Captain Thrash." Even his pet pooch, Hot Dog, has punked out—his new name is "Vicious." You won't find Juggie hanging out at Pop Tate's eatin' burgers any more, either. He now prefers Dingy's, a hard-core greasy spoon, and the Club Chaos where Captain Thrash and his punkette girl friend slam-dance. Archie and Veronica try to talk some sense into ol' Jug, but he just won't listen!

The new punk Jughead finally gives annoying Archie what's been coming to him.

© 1982 by Archie Comic Publications, Inc.

Don't worry though. Jughead was only researching the punk scene for the Riverdale High newspaper. He reverts to normal at the story's end, although he does confess that he understands "why a lot of them (the punks) feel confused in today's world." In fact, he even feels an overpowering urge to return "for more of their weird philosophy?" asks Archie. "No, for more of Dingy's fantastic burgers! They're the best I've ever eaten!" to which Archie exclaims, "And this was the guy I was afraid was changing?"

Well, to tell you the truth, Archie, I was kinda hopin' he would.

—John Holmstrom

Howard Cruse, boffo cartoonist, created the obscenely cute "Barefootz" characters, edits *Gay Comix*, and writes a regular column of commentary for *Comics Scene*.
Art Spiegelman is one of the best artists to emerge from the underground scene (ref.: "Ace Hole, Midget Detective," "Two Fisted Painters," and *Maus*). His *Raw* (co-edited/published with Françoise Mouly) is the only other comic magazine you should bother reading.
Bhob Stewart, besides having a problem with spelling, is also a teacher, writer, artist, critic and information repository.
Harvey Kurtzman is the best.
Pete Hamill, novelist and syndicated columnist, isn't afraid to admit he likes comics.

consumers who think all's well with an art form obsessed with superheroes, barbarians, and space adventurers.

If there's more to life than fantasy, there should be more than fantasy in comics.

—Howard Cruse

What's wrong with comics? In about a hundred words or less? The Audience.

Since the form survives primarily as a commodity, only an intelligent, sensitive, and perceptive audience can force publishers and artists to produce work up to its level. This audience could not create geniuses. Real art is rare, it can surface in any medium (even comics) and may be able to withstand the adversities of neglect. But a Real Audience could at least raise the level of mediocrity. Today, only a handful of comics even achieve mediocrity.

Simply exposing an audience to better work is not enough—John Jakes sells more paperbacks than James Joyce. What is called for is massive re-education in how to see, how to think, an Art Dictatorship that makes the Doorways of Perception more important than the Window of Vulnerability.

—Art Spiegelman

My futile idea was that action in comics, as in any art, doesn't end with one person pounding another person in the jaw. There's also the action of emotion, psychology, character, and idea," said EC's Bernard Krigstein, who abandoned comics for fine art. While an expansive Wim Wenders-like probe of character/emotion/psychology is needed in American storytelling comics, economics and "self-censorship" (as Archie Goodwin once put it) kick it all down to the level of *Reader's Digest* shorthand compression. Only Harvey Pekar, Art Spiegelman, and a handful of others have even attempted to stretch toward the goals Krigstein outlined.

—Bhob

Before the war with Japan, if you wanted to buy junk toys for five cents, you could find these little, tinny gewgaws at Woolworth counters, marked "Made in Japan." Japan seemed to be the source of junky everything. Then came the war, and after that, the new Japan. And the new Japanese government did a very interesting thing. They simply legislated higher standards into their produce and legislated "Made in Japan" junk out of existence. And now, "Made in Japan" has a whole other meaning, the least of which is "junk." Now we come to "Made in America" comics. For whatever reason, our cartoon standards are low. We have a junk cartoon tradition . . . particularly in our comic books. By contrast, just look at what they're doing in Europe, and you'll see how much better we can get. But how to get there . . . well, I'm only supposed to tell you what's wrong with comics. How to make them better . . . that's another chapter.

—Harvey Kurtzman

There are some obvious problems with mainstream comics today: lousy reproduction, unreadable text, high newsstand prices. But the critical problem is creative exhaustion. Too many comics simply fail to surprise. We have seen those superheroes for too long, in all their absurd variations; we have seen too many clones of the wildly original creations of that brilliant first generation of comic book makers. There is also an impression of assembly-line ennui: too many pages swiped from Jack Kirby or Will Eisner or Alex Toth; too many disparate hands at work; too much calculation and not enough inspiration. These methods come from American industry: they have left the comics in as terrible shape as the automobile industry, to cite one obvious example. What comics need are individuals, men and women who can write, pencil, ink, and emote, all at once. They need executives who will take risks. They need to attract writers and artists from other fields, men and women who don't see this extraordinary art form as simply another address on Grub Street. Where is the Fellini of comics? The Woody Allen? The Francis Coppola? Out there, somewhere, over the next hill, waiting for a chance. Mainstream comics should open the door to the new, or go out searching for it; if they don't, they will surely wither and die, joining pulp magazines on the ashheap of worn-out forms.

—Pete Hamill

media. Nim (Detonation Man) and Incredible Hulk and radio (NBC's Dimension X). So EC publisher Bill Gaines changed the title of his bi-monthly Saddle Romances to **Weird Science** with the May-June 1950 issue.

The surreal ending short stories of Gaines's new title reflected the mood of the early fifties — a war-paranoia mushrooming in H-bomb detonations, UFOs in formation, mass hysteria, alien invasion

'The surprise ending short stories of *Weird Science* reflected the mood of the early fifties — cold war paranoia mushrooming in H-bomb detonations, UFOs in formation, mass hysteria, alien invasion

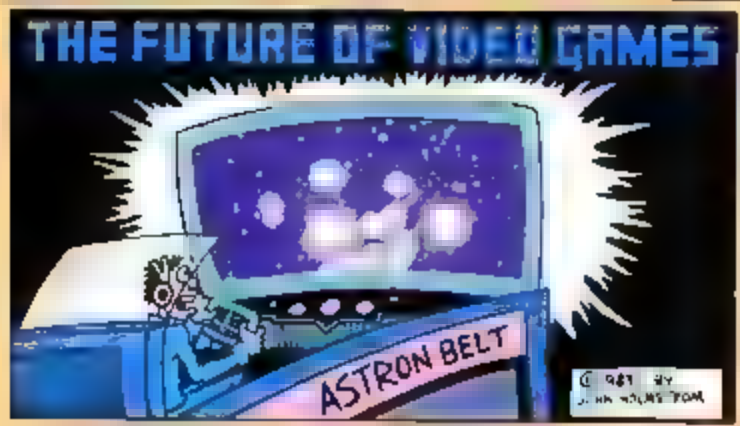
RE-WEIRD

The hit-and-miss [illegible] for the most part [illegible] of themes in comic book form. The field had soared [illegible] to the [illegible] for [illegible] heading the new magazine pack while also diversifying into other [illegible] busily, including Williamson's lush lines for The One Who Waits" and the memorable Wood-illustrated "Mars is Heaven."

Back then you could've picked up all twenty-two for $2.20. This time around you pay $75 as advertised by **Russ Cochran** [Box 469 West Plains, MO 65775] in a [illegible] large-sized [9" x 12¾"], slipcased hardbacks with accompanying annotations by Bill Spicer, Mark Evanier, John Benson, Doug Menville and color covers. These EC stories can now be viewed in flawless black and white [illegible] Every line. Every detail. EC resurrected.

Shot-

TURN TO PAGE 44 FOR AN INTERVIEW WITH [illegible]



KNOW FROM SEGA TO BE NEW HOME SYSTEMS, BUT HAD A CHANCE TO ATTEND THE AMUSEMENTS AND MUSIC OPERATORS ASSOCIATION EXPO WHERE ONCE A YEAR THE VIDEO-PINBALL MONSTERS SHOWCASES NEW PRODUCT. ALL THE NEW GAMES YOU'LL BE SEEING IN THE ARCADES FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, FOR A MORE DETAILED REPORT, PICK UP THE MARCH ISSUE OF VIDEO GAMES (VG).

THE OBVIOUS TREND IN MOST OF THE NEW GAMES IS THREE DIMENSIONAL EFFECTS. REALISTIC GRAPHICS IS WHAT THE GAME DESIGNERS WERE UNFORTUNATELY IN SOME CASES, A GOOD GAME SACRIFICED FOR SPECIAL EFFECTS.

SEGA, THE COMPANY THAT BROUGHT US ZAXXON AND TURBO, HAS THE MOST INTERESTING SCIENCE FICTION GAMES. BUCK ROGERS (ALL BUT IN NAME) AS TURBO PITS ZAXXON YOU HAVE A SPACESHIP THROUGH INTERPLANETARY SCENARIOS INSTEAD OF DRIVING A CAR DOWN THE ROAD, AND BLAST ENEMY SHIPS IN YOUR WAY. ASTRON BELT, A PROTOTYPE GAME THAT USES VIDEO DISC TECHNOLOGY TO REPLACE COMPUTER GRAPHICS WITH FILM OF SPACESHIPS, PLANETS, AND EXPLOSIONS, WAS ON HAND, BUT YOU WON'T SEE IT FOR ANOTHER SIX MONTHS. ALSO ON HAND WAS SUPER-ZAXXON, A BETTER LOOKING VERSION OF ZAXXON THAT MOVES TWICE AS FAST.

ATARI'S LONE SCIENCE-FICTION OFFERING WAS LIBERATOR, A MISSILE COMMAND SEQUEL. YOU MUST DEFEND A REVOLVING PLANET BY FIRING FROM FOUR BASES OUTSIDE ITS ATMOSPHERE AND BLASTING UP REBEL FORCES ON THE PLANET'S SURFACE.

THE ONLY OTHER SCIENCE-FICTION GAME WAS FROM WILLIAMS, THE DEFENDER AND ROBOTRON PEOPLE. NEW SINISTAR IS A COMBINATION OF DEFENDER AND ASTEROIDS. SINISTAR FEATURES A BIZARRE MORPHING VISUAL EFFECT WHEN THE ALIENS F[illegible] ARMOUR BUILD THE SINISTER SINISTAR SPACESHIP. [illegible] BLOWS YOU AWAY BETTER THAN ALIENS.

THE MOST POPULAR GAMES SEEMED TO BE THE CARTOON-[illegible] GYRUS (ROBERT [illegible] GOTTLIEB, WAS THE BIG FAVORITE. [illegible] ARS AND ORANGE), DIG-DUGGER, [illegible] SPACE-[illegible] CHARACTERS WITH LEGS AND ARMS ON A PYRAMID OF CUBES WHILE BEING CHASED BY A GANGLY [illegible] SNAKE AND WE DID. [illegible] ANTHONY CHARACTERS, STUPID, BUT ALL OF FUN. NINTENDO WHO DID DONKEY KONG, BROUGHT OUT A PUNCHY GAME THAT'S BETTER THAN THE CARTOONS I SAW. THE CHARACTERS WERE MICE. THERE WAS THE DE-ICING CHEESE TIME, WHERE [illegible] REMOVES A CHEESE BEING CHASED BY A REEL HOT DOGS AND AN EGG. NOT TO MENTION THREE NEW PAC-MAN GAMES: BABY PAC-MAN, SUPER PAC-MAN AND PAC-MAN PLUS.

FAR AWAY FROM THE SHOW WITH THE STRONG IMPRESSION THAT SCIENCE FICTION IS CURRENTLY ON THE WAY OUT, BUT THAT VIDEO-DISC TECHNOLOGY, WHICH ALLOWS YOU TO PUT YOURSELF INTO A FIRST PERSON SCIENCE FICTION MOVIE AND DIRECT THE ACTION, WILL EVENTUALLY GIVE THE SF GAMES A STRONG COME BACK.

—JOHN HOLMSTROM

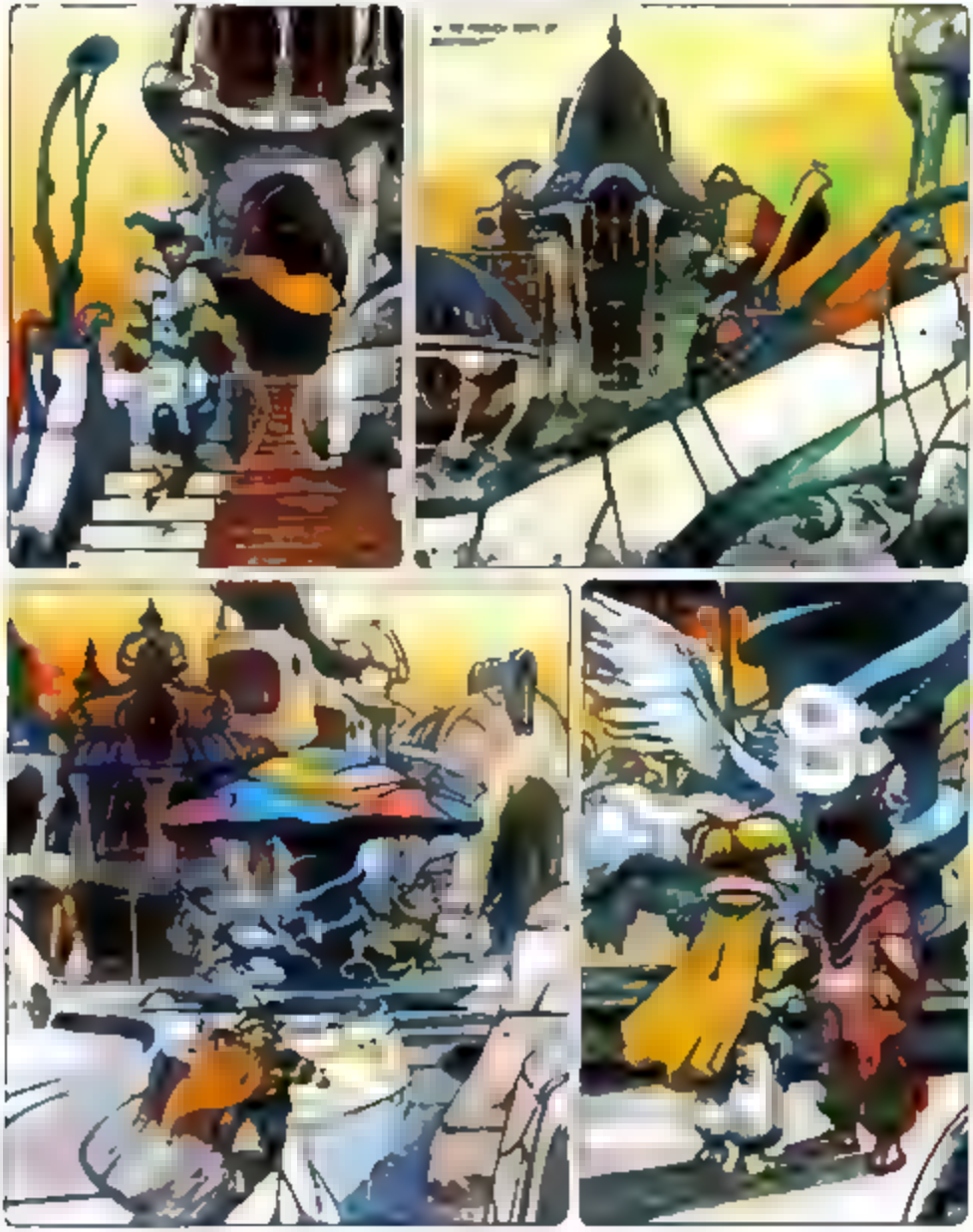
ARE YOU HOT ENOUGH TO PLAY WITH JOURNEY?

Introducing "JOURNEY ESCAPE," the challenging new DATA AGE™ Video Game

You're on the road with America's hottest rock group, Journey. And they're count-
ing on you. You're the only player who can help [illegible]
vehicle. Only you can outsmart the [illegible]
the [illegible] and groupies. If you [illegible]
are you hot

UP TO NOW, YOU'VE HAD IT EASY.

The City That Didn't Exist



PAUL

J HANNARD
28 Day of strik
T.P.S.
WHAT
DOWN WITH THE
DIVINE RIGHT EMPLOYER
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GENERAL WORK CONFEDERATION
SEEK YOUR
AIMS!

28 Day d str
J HANNAH
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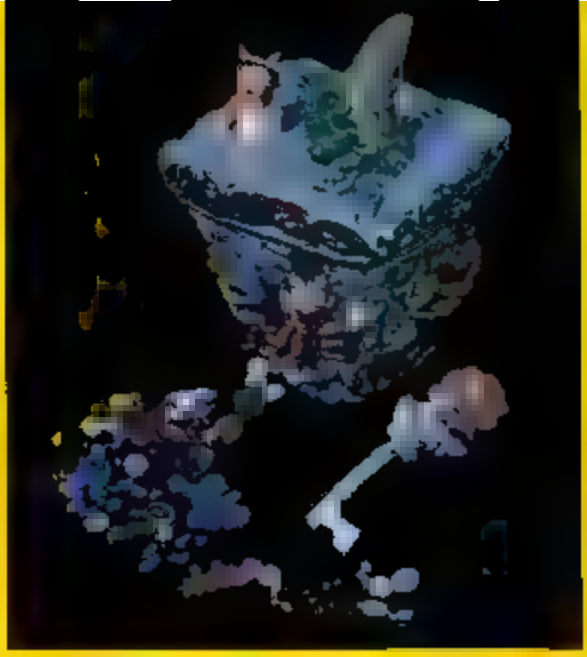
Your fantastic adventure is about to begin

...when you meet the New World descendants of goblins, dragons, fairies, leprechauns ...and set off on a quest for their 12 buried treasure chests worth more than $10,000!



Somewhere in North America, twelve great lost Faerie treasures are buried in hand-crafted casks. They may be hidden in your city or your local park, or even in your own backyard. The clues to finding each of them can be found within the twelve full-color paintings and verses of THE SECRET. You only have to decipher the clues in any pair to learn the location of a treasure chest. In each waits a key, the return of which will gain its treasure for you. Even if you can't retrieve the chest but believe you have determined its site, you may still win the treasure by successfully completing the form in the back of the book with a precise description and explanation of your discovery.

Finally, you can learn not only the whereabouts of the Fair People's treasure, but also a complete tongue-in-cheek field guide to the modern forms and hiding places of each descendants—the Fall Trails, Maitre D'eamons, Elf Alphas, Tupperwerewolves, Freudian Sylphs, C[illegible]r Vultures, and finally those who believe and begin to doubt existence.

THE SECRET
A TREASURE HUNT

Written by Sean Kelly and Ted Mann. Artwork by John Pierard, John Palencar and Overton Loyd. Sculpture by Jobillen Trilling. Photographed by Ben Asen. Developed and Edited by Byron Preiss. $9.95 at all bookstores.

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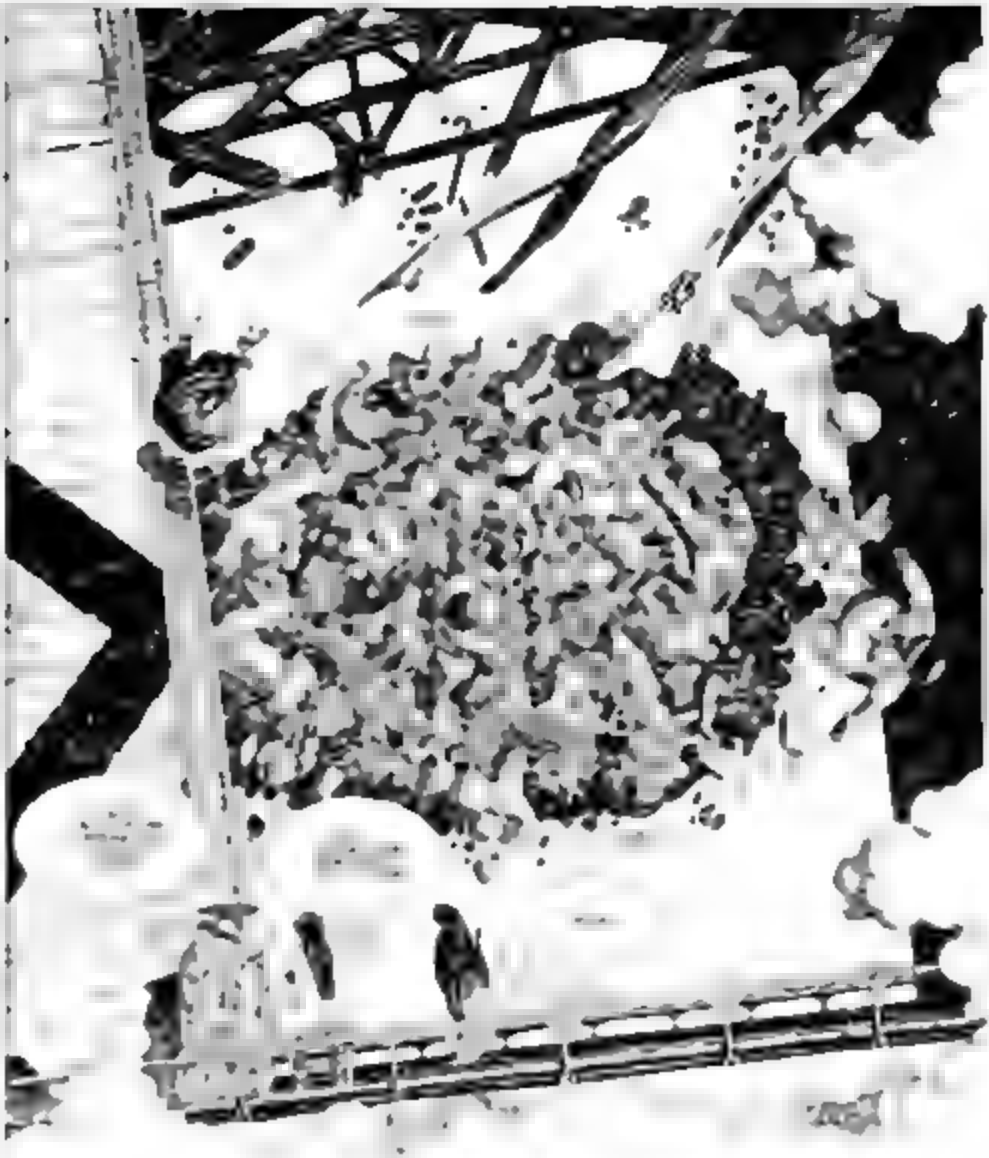

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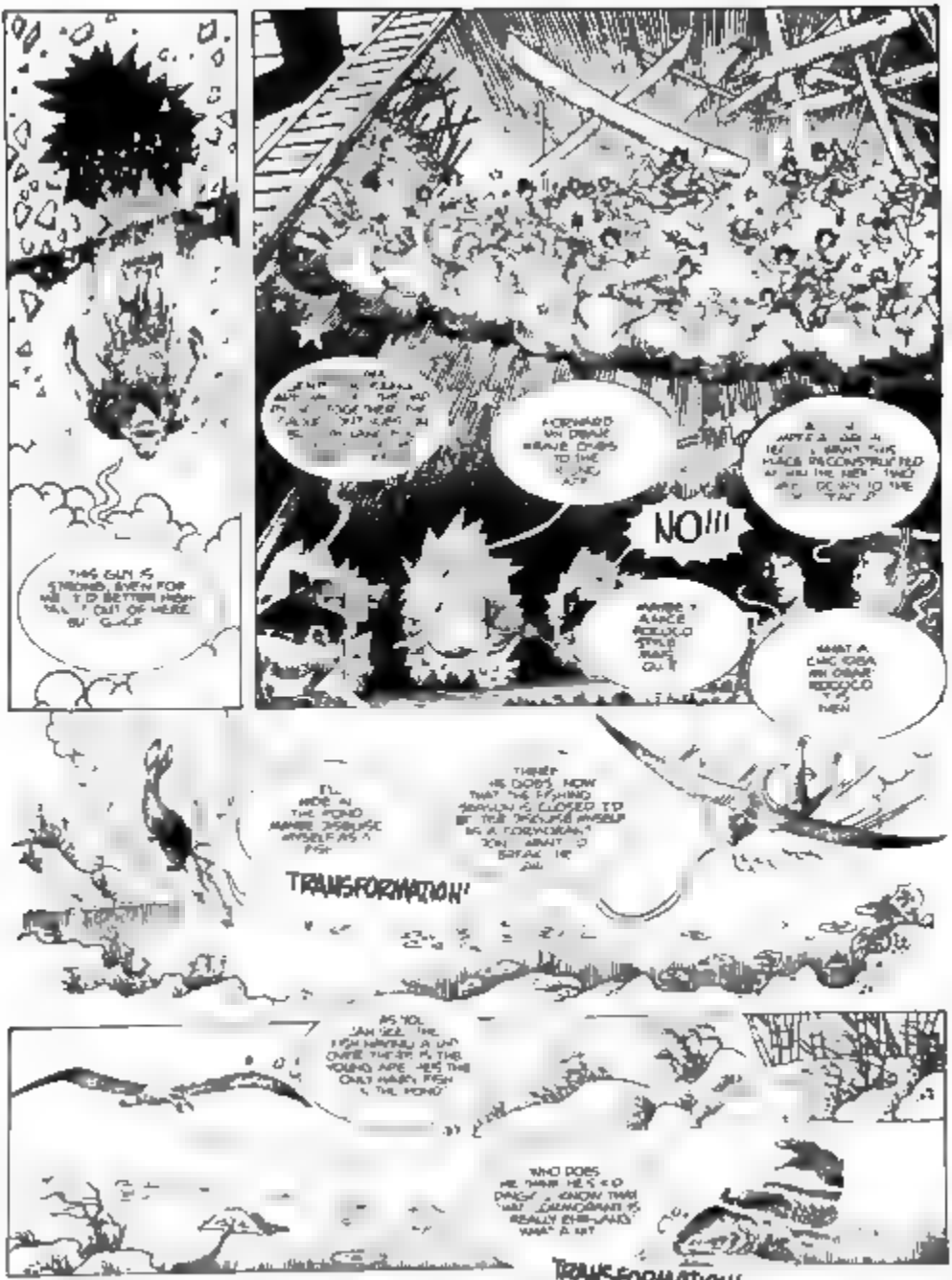
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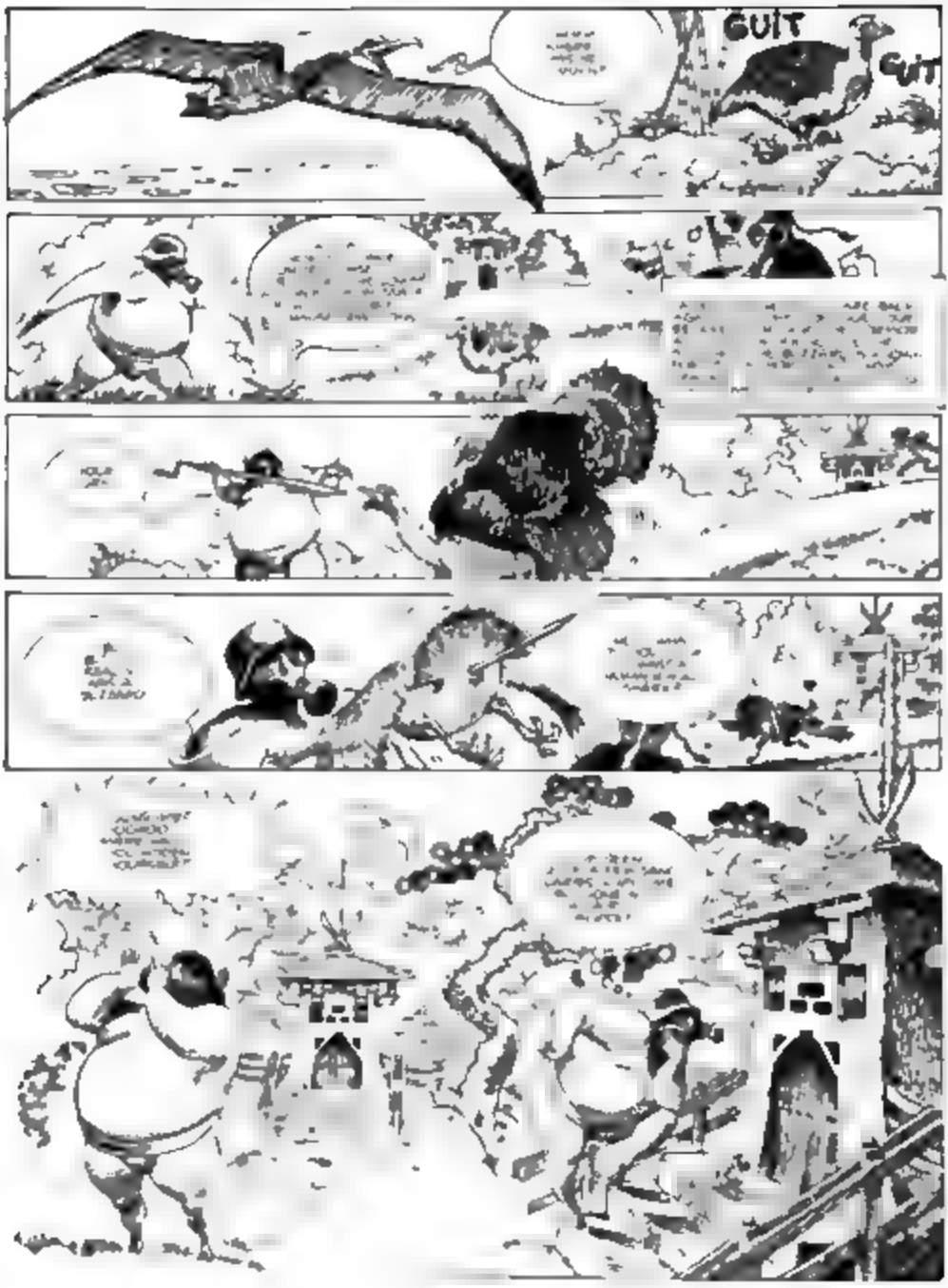
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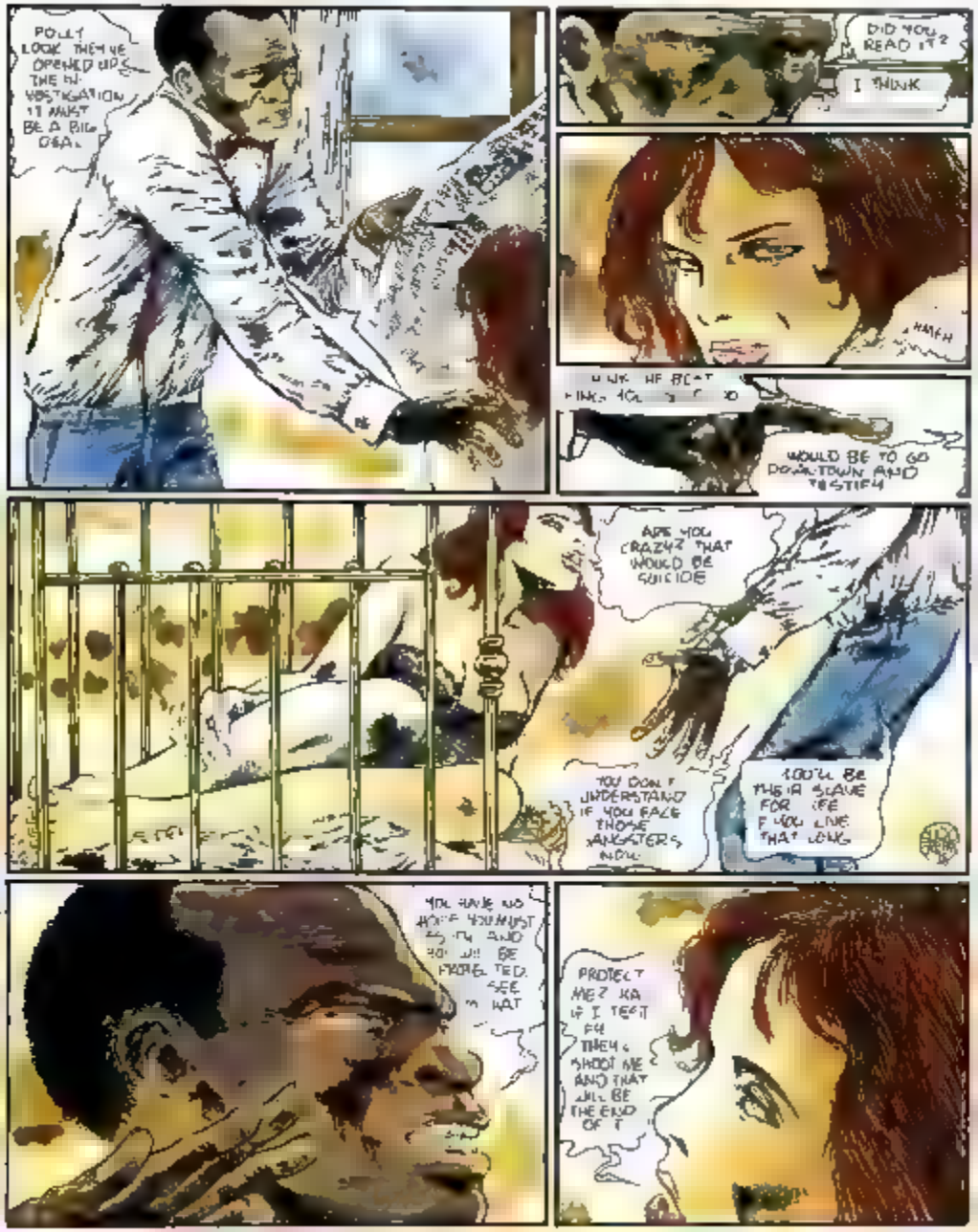
OH POWERFUL EMPEROR! THERE IS ANOTHER SHIP AND OUTSIDE
NOT OUTSIDE ANY LONGER HERE AM
MOTHER WHAT A MESS
YOUNG ONE! YOU'VE OVERSTEPPED YOUR BOUNDS IN THIS!
ONE MOMENT - I MUST TELL YOU ONE THING THE SANCTUARY WAS CONSECRATED BY THE GOD OF THE
APES!
APES
EEEEEEAAAIII

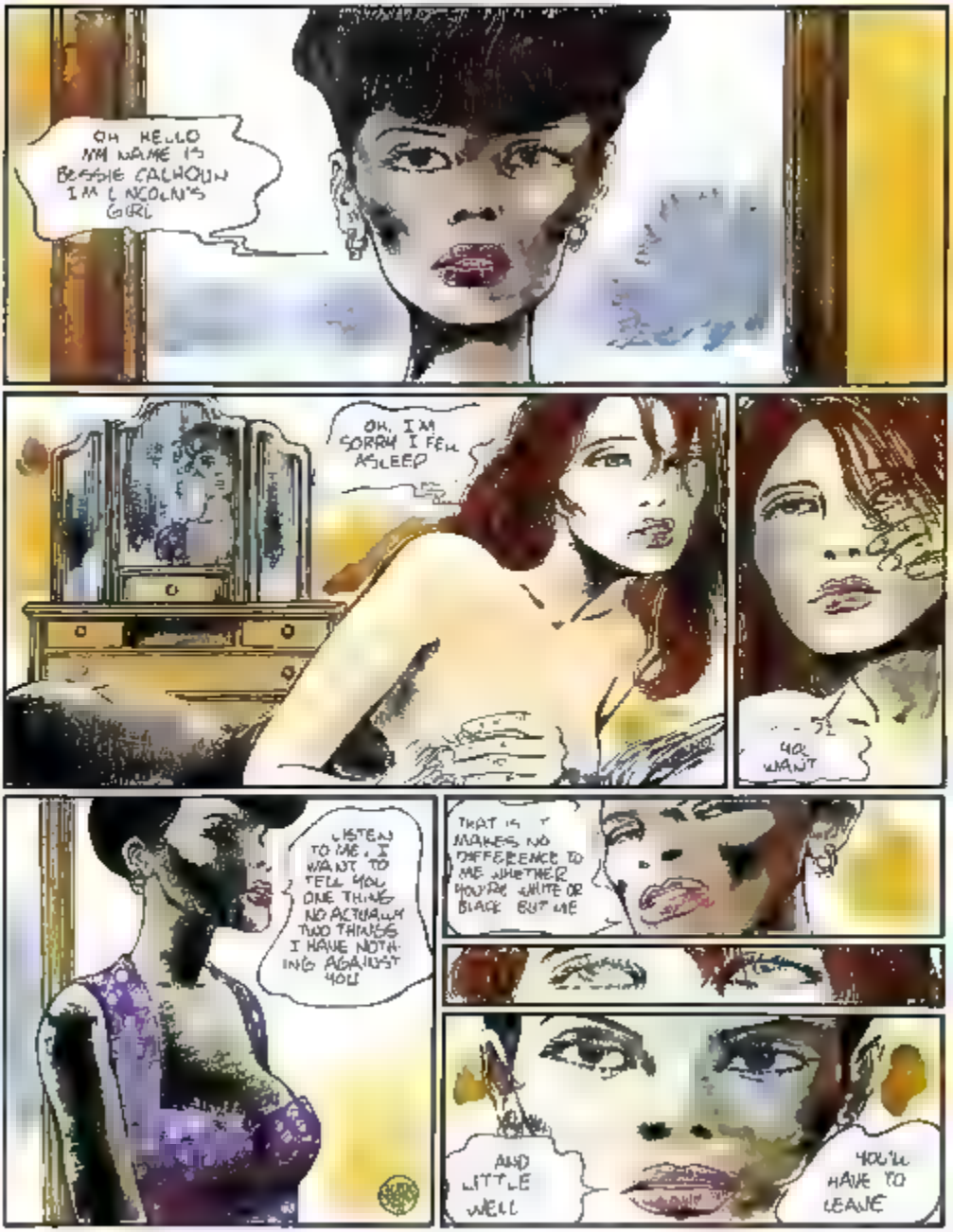
THE MAN FROM HARLEM


POLLY LOOK THEY'VE OPENED UP THE INVESTIGATION IT MUST BE A BIG DEAL
DID YOU READ IT?
I THINK
HMMM
WOULD BE TO GO DOWNTOWN AND TESTIFY
ARE YOU CRAZY? THAT WOULD BE SUICIDE
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND IF YOU FACE THOSE GANGSTERS NOW
YOU'LL BE THEIR SLAVE FOR LIFE IF YOU LIVE THAT LONG
YOU HAVE NO CHOICE YOU MUST GO TO THE D.A. AND YOU WILL BE PROTECTED. SEE WHAT
PROTECT ME? HA IF I TEST FY THEY'LL SHOOT ME AND THAT WILL BE THE END OF IT

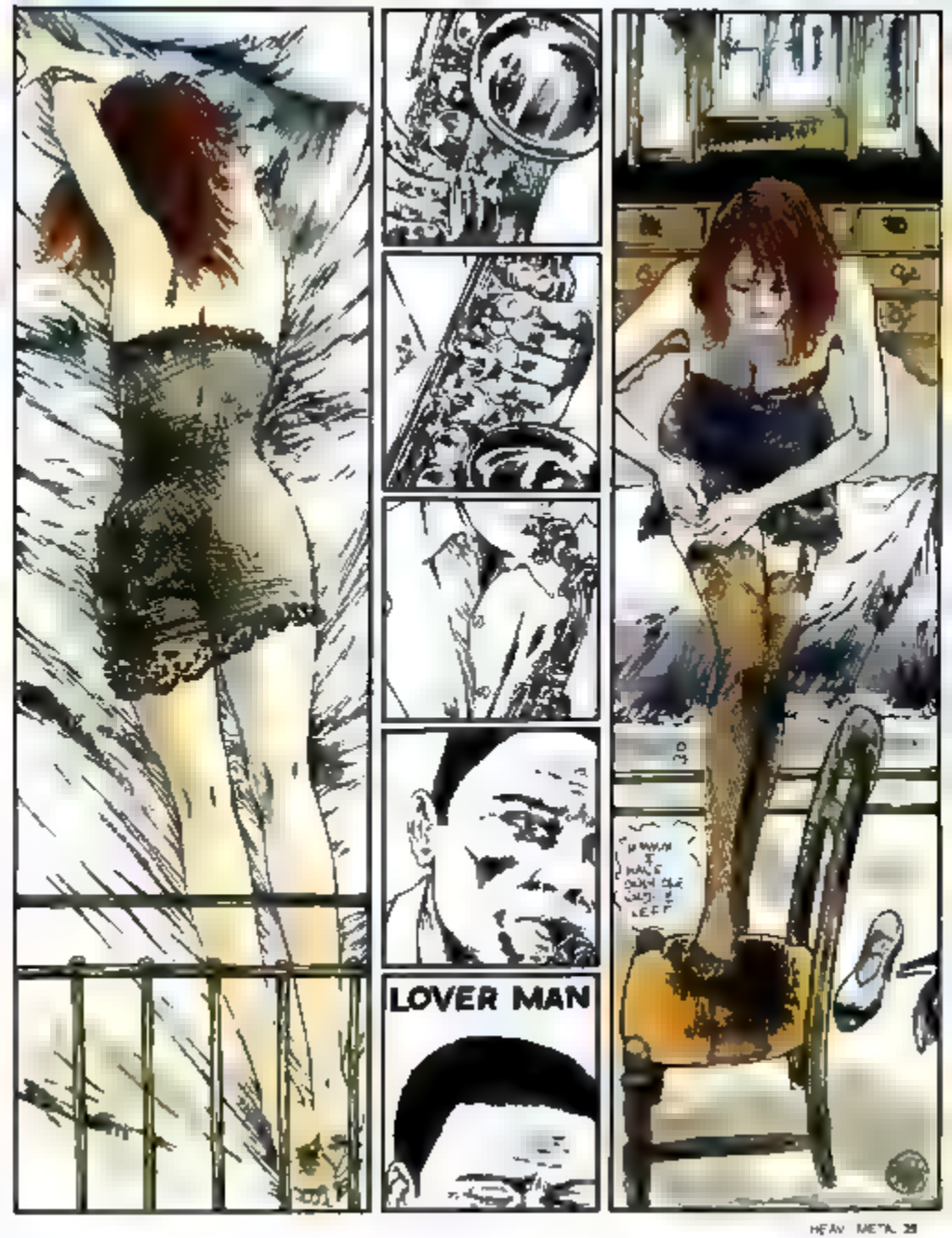
MY ONLY CHANCE IS TO FIND JACKIE ONLY HE COULD TRUM PROTECT ME HE'S GOT TO TAKE IN HIS BEST INTEREST TOO
YOU'RE ONLY FOOLING YOURSELF YOU'RE A NICE GUY, BUT YOU'VE GOT TO LET ME GO AND FEND FOR MYSELF
MILES...
...TONES
OH AH BLAH'S HANDS BOTHER YOU?

BEFORE I JAM I'M REALLY DEAD

AND IF I STAYED WITH JOHNNY FOREVER MAYBE EVEN HIS MOTHER WOULD COME TO UNDERSTAND
HIS HANDS ARE SO GENTLE NO ONE HAS EVER TOUCHED ME LIKE THAT BEFORE
HE'S WONDERFULLY CHARMING I THINK I COULD FALL IN LOVE WITH HIM IF I GAVE MYSELF HALF A CHANCE MAYBE I SHOULD AVOID HIM
EMBRACEABLE YOU
BUT HE'S GONE NOW I GAVE HIM THE WRONG IMPRESSION I MADE HIM THINK THAT I DIDN'T WANT HIM


OH HELLO MY NAME IS BESSIE CALHOUN I'M LINCOLN'S GIRL
OH, I'M SORRY I FELL ASLEEP
NO WAIT
LISTEN TO ME, I WANT TO TELL YOU ONE THING NO ACTUALLY TWO THINGS I HAVE NOTHING AGAINST YOU
THAT IS IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO ME WHETHER YOU'RE WHITE OR BLACK BUT ME
AND LITTLE WILL
YOU'LL HAVE TO LEAVE

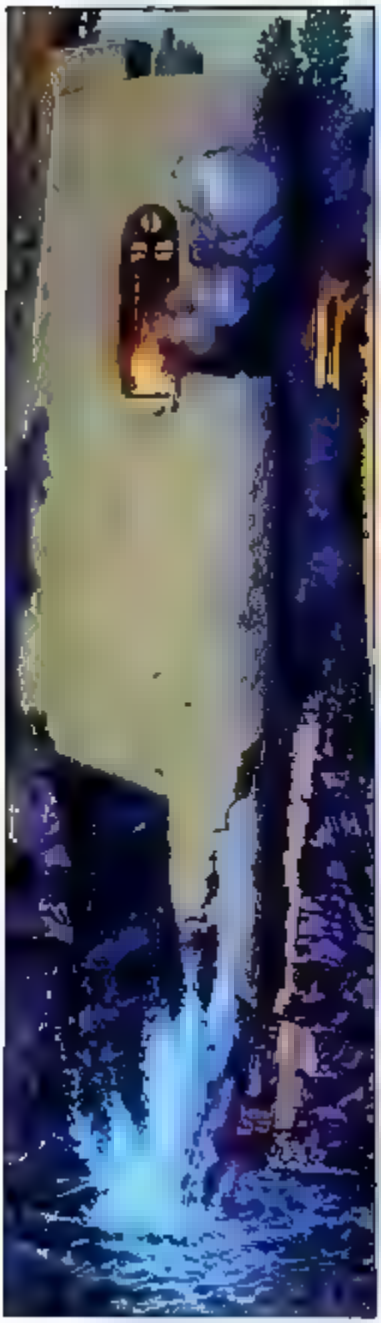
THAT'S ALL I HEAR AROUND HERE. THEY DON'T DISLIKE ME BUT THEY DON'T WANT ME AROUND

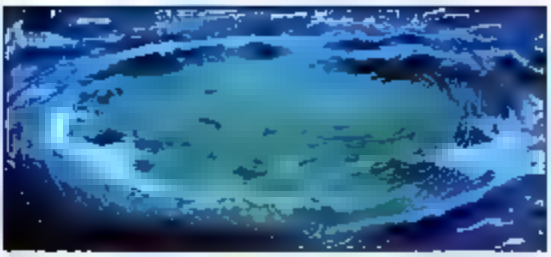

LOVER MAN

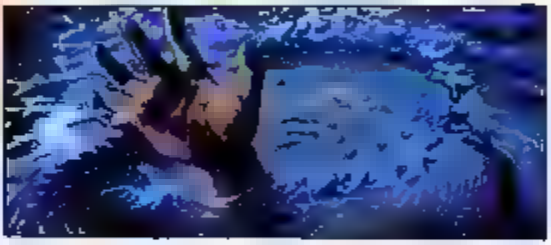
I REALLY WANTED TO STAY WITH TONIGHT BUT THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE
FIFTH A

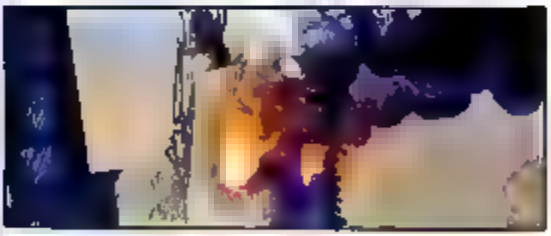
DEN II

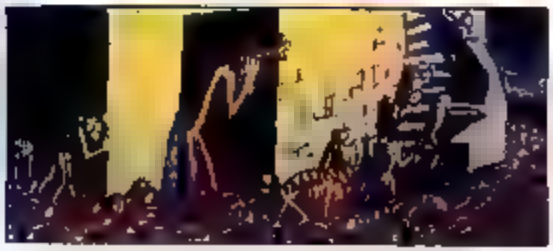
EEEE

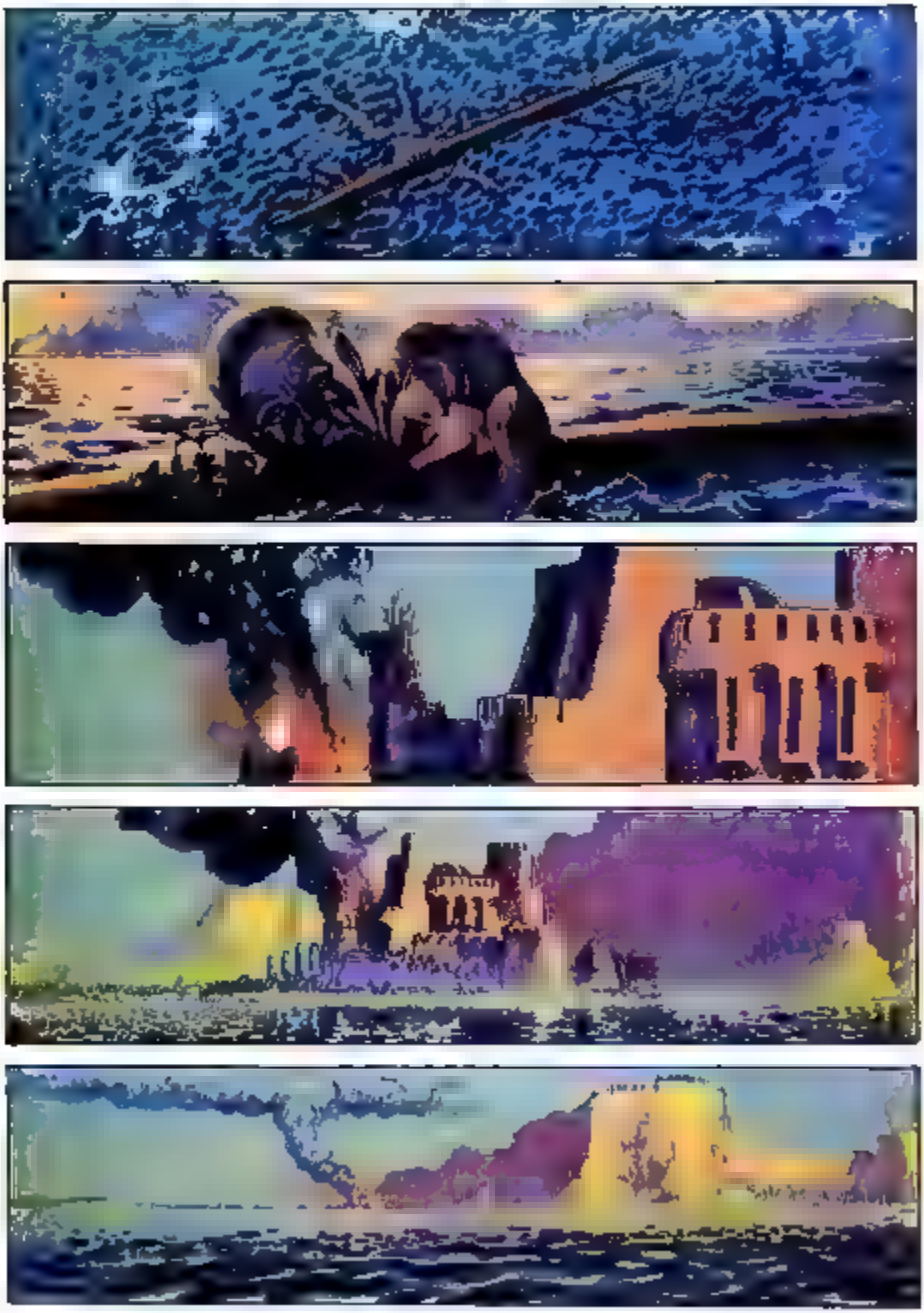






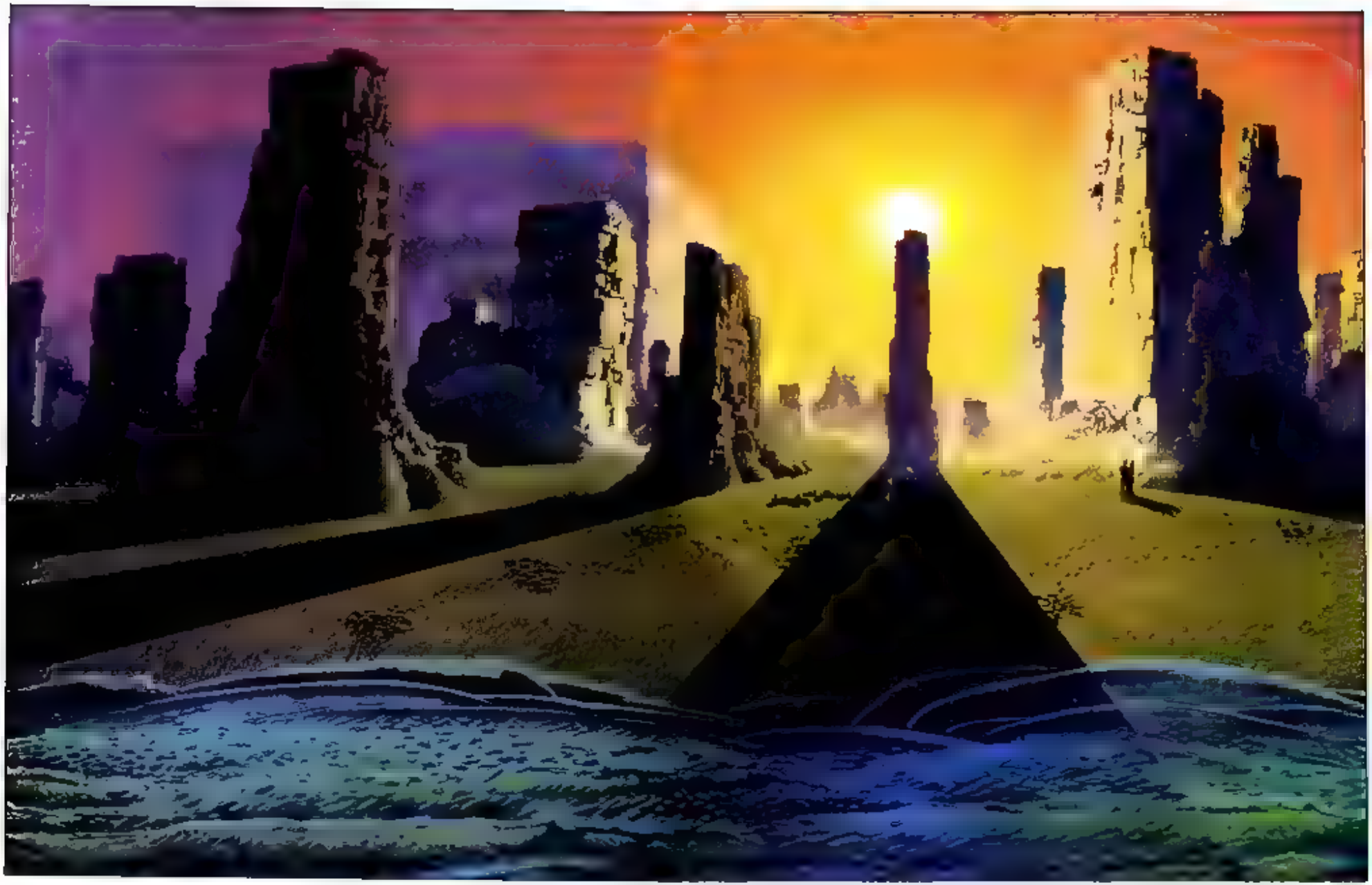






SPLASH
Water

THE DRAMITES
Where?
I killed the monster that killed Tajin and Mauro.
I need new



THE END

FEAT OF CLAY

AN INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST S. CLAY WILSON

When Zap Comix first

underground comix stylist. And the current trend in fine art towards a raw street-smart neo-expressionism further validates the

transcending power. But that line of discussion is almost moot in light of Wilson's own history. Throwing

aside his University of Nebraska fine arts training (he becomes nearly violent when thinking of teachers who told him he was doing

cause he drew recognizable figures), Wilson fo-

ing, acid-filled nights and days in San Francisco during the Haight-Ashbury

fall of the now-defunct Museum of the Surreal and

otherwise. And with his arrival in Manhattan an early wish of mine was fulfilled -to meet, work with, and worship at the pungent feet of what I imagined to be a

biker of a cartoonist. Here was the guy whose drawings were like a secret initiation rite among my peers, those who babbled lines from his fevered and crammed panels were part of the same sick gang of c and those offended were the dips. Though the massive Sasquatch of a man that did meet was less of a biker and more like the repressed Victorian he described himself as, he was still able to hunch over and with thorough aplomb mumble lines like, 'I'd get up to shake your hand, but my colostomy bag might fall out.'

Brad Balfour

MW: Tell me something about your childhood.

SCW: [illegible] in Lincoln Nebraska was kind of re

work. She saved all these

about age two on the

parade, with a lot of bugles

marching down the street.

MW: Were comic books a

SCW: Piracy Mad Two Fisted Tales Front Line Combat

MW: Which artists had the

SCW: I liked Wood, and Davis, and loved Kurtzman's covers. Cartoon guys I liked for cartoon genres. We loved George Evans's World War [illegible] airplane stuff. Aces High [illegible] the stuff [illegible] to WW [illegible] airplane strips for

did for the horror magazines, of course, and also [illegible] Graham Ingels

[illegible]ence in your work from

SCW: Yeah, but I'm not sure

kind of lunatic telegraphic quality, and the color gags Jack Davis used to do for *Playboy* and *Esquire*, and Kurtzman's kind of whiplash line thing, and the washes.

As well as lots of traditional stuff, like John Singer Sar-

MW: What other things in your life influenced your art work? Certainly the slant and direction of your work

thing.

SCW: My buddies and I just did a lot of drawing to

my productive peak of age [illegible] lot of these comic strips. Other guys went out and played basketball, but we'd draw. We'd read this place that threw out big rolls of paper. We'd do these long, involved battle scene murals several feet long. We'd split the

and a whole bunch of us would get together and just draw away on it like a big jam session.

MW: Did you have any weird experiences, things that would lead to the sort of your work? Or are the

SCW: Well, I feel I'm very moralistic. In a way, it's like I'm preaching—depicting Hell or something. Every-

shalt not, thou shalt not. So

© 1982 by S. Clay Wilson

what I'm doing is drawing fine angels thou-shalt-not-ing. They're surrounded by temptation, and not succumbing, whereas the devils of course are involved in the activities right? see my stuff mostly as a depiction of Hell with a certain amount of cynicism. The sources go way back to Grunewald, Breughel, Bosch, and artists like that.

HM: Do you find it purging?

SCW: Yes, like art is therapy in a way.

HM: What would you have become if you hadn't been an artist?

SCW: A writer, possibly, don't know.

HM: I know some people who fantasize that they would've been outlaws, but instead they've turned in the direction and found self-therapy in their work.

SCW: I think there's something to that. It enables you to release stuff. I guess I'm trying to join my own nightmares with other people's.

HM: When did you decide to do art professionally?

SCW: I always wanted to be an artist, for as long as I can remember. Comics were something else, I didn't make a big, bold distinction about it. Others did. When I was going to the University of Nebraska, I got into a heavy discourse of the time, the comic was abstract expressionism, Kline, Pollock, etc. The worst thing you could be called at the time was an illustrator. My God! My stuff was always condemned because it was figurative. You're not an artist, you're an illustrator, because you're sitting there drawing pictures. Or just the idea of text of word balloons. People categorize images of comic strips when they see characters talking to each other instead of just calling it art. The history of the comic strip, the elaborate history of the various styles is equally as rich as most of the art movements in history.

I did get my BFA, but mainly I was into drama, psychology, criminology, sociology, more than art.

HM: Later, when you moved to San Francisco, things started changing?

SCW: Yeah, I looked up this guy I knew from when I had lived in Kansas for a while, a poet named Charles Plymell who had a press in San Francisco. I went over to his place to give him a copy of a portfolio I had done and Dan Donahue was buying the press to print the first Zap Comic. I had seen some of Crumb's stuff in Cavalier which he had done at about the same time I'd done this portfolio. Through Donahue I went over to Val Clump and gave him one of my portfolios, because I had his stuff and liked the comic so we got stoned and shit and he liked my portfolio. I did a little drawing and he said, "What about expanding the idea of comics, doing underground comics?" meaning at the time doing it yourself instead of going through the big publishers like Marvel. Then he invited me to draw some stuff and then we got hold of Rick Griffin and Victor Moscoso who at the time were doing comics in their posters for the Fillmore and the Avalon. We decided to form a company to do Zap and between the four of us we got the second one, quite literally selling it out of the trunk of a car.

S. Clay Wilson. His cigar is big and smelly.

HM: When did you start making enough money to live off your art?

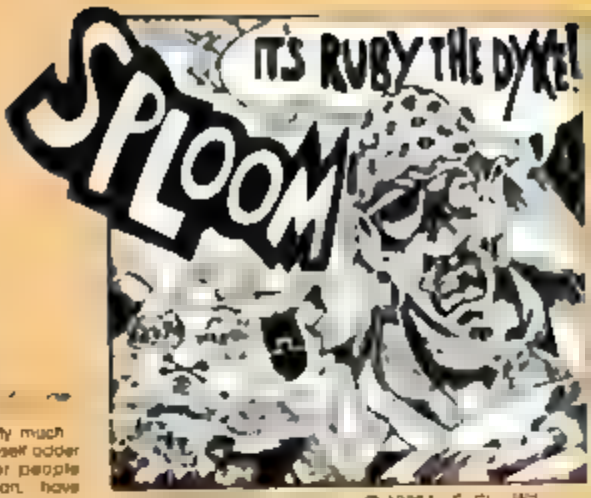
SCW: Just a couple of years after the first Zap #1 or 10 maybe. People started going and are still buying these comics ironically the same people to whom I tried selling my stuff to who threw me out of their shops saying bad vibes, and the stuff was too violent. Now I'm thanked me for keeping them in business. And that's amusing.

HM: How do your parents feel about your work?

SCW: They haven't seen it.

HM: All these years, don't they ask to see it?

SCW: No, they know better. They know I'm making a living doing what I do but beyond that they have no idea. They do know however that it would shock them and they wouldn't understand it. And I don't think they expect me to explain it to them. So it's not even talked about. My mother found a Zap once and was really shocked and recoiled. She was over visiting with dope at the time and showed it to my sister saying, "Do you realize what your brother's doing?"



© 1982 by S. Clay Wilson.

MM: Bikers seem to be a key image in your work. Were you ever a biker?

SCW: That's just a fantasy thing. Spain [fellow underground comic artist Spain Rodriguez] was a biker but never really was part of a club. I've had bikes— clip Harleys and so forth—but I was never part of any club.

MM: Do you know the Hell's Angels?

SCW: I've met them. Spain knows them.

MM: Do they read your

SCW: Yes. In fact, they like it. I gave one of my portfolios to [Oakland Angels chief and star of *Gimme Shelter*] Sonny Barger to get into a Janis Joplin concert once when I had no money. The Angels were fighting in one room, while Joplin was singing to the hippies in the other. It was like one of my drawings come to life.

MM: What other things have

points, or critical moments

SCW:

appealed to me. It goes

Belgium. And we get paid

you're an artist, or a biker

MM:

SCW: Yeah, pretty much. I don't consider myself odder than many other people that I know. I mean, I have an old lady I eat and shit I go to the movies and walk on the beach, just like every

all in all, I don't consider myself any more abnormal than the people I know who are down at the local bo

plumbers. Their lifestyles are nowhere different than mine. What they do for a

and I'm sure there's a whole

into doing art work than tearing down a wall. Going to the local bar here gives you a real cross-section. On one hand, I'm an oddball but on the other I'm not. Nobody gives a shit if you're odd or not, because everybody's odd enough in their

MM: s he Checkered

SCW: No, he's a cartoon

MM:

SCW:

MM: How would you describe your relationship with

who really rises above all the other characters for you.

SCW:

people can identify with

bland crap in the Sunday

after another. So the Checkered Demon is like the guy down at the bar, a plumber or a hardhat. A lot of people identify with the character and the ideal he expresses, and I guess I must feel the same way. I'm not saying that everything he thinks I think as well. It's more like a fantasy thing.

MM: What about the homosexuality that runs through some of your work?

SCW: I think it's funny. I don't

pressed Victorian, so I'm

diminish

do it because I

same. The whole thing is ludicrous, absurd.

MM:

SCW:

cination with deviancy and I like drawing it both in comic strips and water colors. I find it entertaining. I'm sure a shrink would have a field day trying to figure out why I did it. I just find it fun. People can take it or

MM:

SCW:

MM:

SCW:

good artist. That might be because I have high standards. I see

invested in other people's artwork than my own, as far as getting ideas and so forth.

MM: If you could name one

SCW:

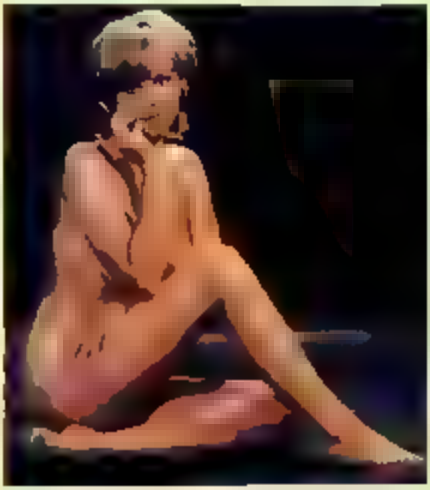
Media Consultant for S. Clay Wilson's Museum of

By subscribing to *National Lampoon* you can help us settle a terrible argument between Mandy and Candy.

Mandy and Candy here have just had one of the most awful arguments you ever heard. Well, Mandy told Candy (they're both marketing experts with MBAs) that she could sell more subscriptions to *National Lampoon* by wearing lots of eye shadow and posing in wholesome outdoor surroundings than Candy could posing her way. Candy said, "Tell me another one!"

Candy says that modern men respond better to a sales pitch that features an attractive woman, wearing minimal makeup, more coyly posed against a plain dark background. "Double phooey," says Mandy.

So it's up to you, the reader, to settle this argument by subscribing to the marketing technique of your choice. You can also save money, but that's a minor point outlined on the coupon. So, please, subscribe today for the marketing MBA of your choice and help us settle this argument between two girls we're very, very fond of. Maybe then we'll get some peace



"I just know I'm right," says Mandy. "Fill out my coupon and help me really show Candy!"

"I've my coupon to subscribe to *National Lampoon*," says Candy. "I've just got to put that Mandy in her place. She thinks she knows everything."

GALLERY: The Lowbrow Art of ROBERT WILLIAMS

We asked [illegible] artist S. Clay Wilson to interview Pop artist Robert Williams for this month's gallery. Thus

WILSON: The first question I'd like to ask you is in regard to a remark made in your Zondervan Art book about a goat as an art supply. Were you tested a pistol or defend yourself against a jigsaw biker while you were working on Ed "Big Daddy" Roth?

ROBT WMS: Oh, no. That was precisely the way it was. This was in my own all right, but the part of the book was written by Gilbert Shelton. He got the story from me, and he knew — but by the way you put it it sounds like I was having to make me sit — be some kind of Art Institute interesting. There — the way it was in fact — I was in Ed Roth's office at Roth Studios in Maywood, California. Roth, as you remember, built custom show cars and motorcycles. One of it contained with him at — much else. Eng — one of — to create all sorts of — it was a — shop — business — say, this is — after Roth himself — years of — made some mention of it publicly on a — to go — comic — Anyway, there had been — trouble — and obviously there was going to be more — trouble — came into work — morning, and there were bullet holes in the walls and floor. Roth told me all trouble breaks out — and around — it out with them. I felt very relieved when he said that. So then he finished — last sentence or saying "A old gun will be hidden above the — spindles on the wall. I — used the gun. Finally — the trouble blew over. That was a long time ago. Roth is a — conservative citizen now.

WILSON: You mean your book is full of shit.

ROBT WMS: — you find some bullshit in — at book. I'll give you your $10.95 back.

WILSON: A — new — comics journal said — the book is an — attempt at a manifesto.

ROBT WMS: Well, — all — but writing about picking your nose can be a — subject, too. The book — an alternative to the upper class art — that people like you and me don't seem — to be able to make it.

WILSON: The primary — cartoon character of yours, Coochie — now, does he or does he not have a dress on? — does — appear he — transvestite. Are you a — transvestite?

ROBT WMS: Now, I — could say that it — a dress, and I could say — but since the cartoon character — an insect — but — this part — him as a — carapace — bony shell insects have. But I won't say that. Instead, I'll gratify your progressive fantasy for perversion and say, yes, that's a dress — him to be — specifically — purposely made the gender of Coochie — I — vague — to add a paradoxical and mystical personality — him. But by the second or third strip — the character developed a masculine street personality. To answer your last question, no, I'm not a TV.

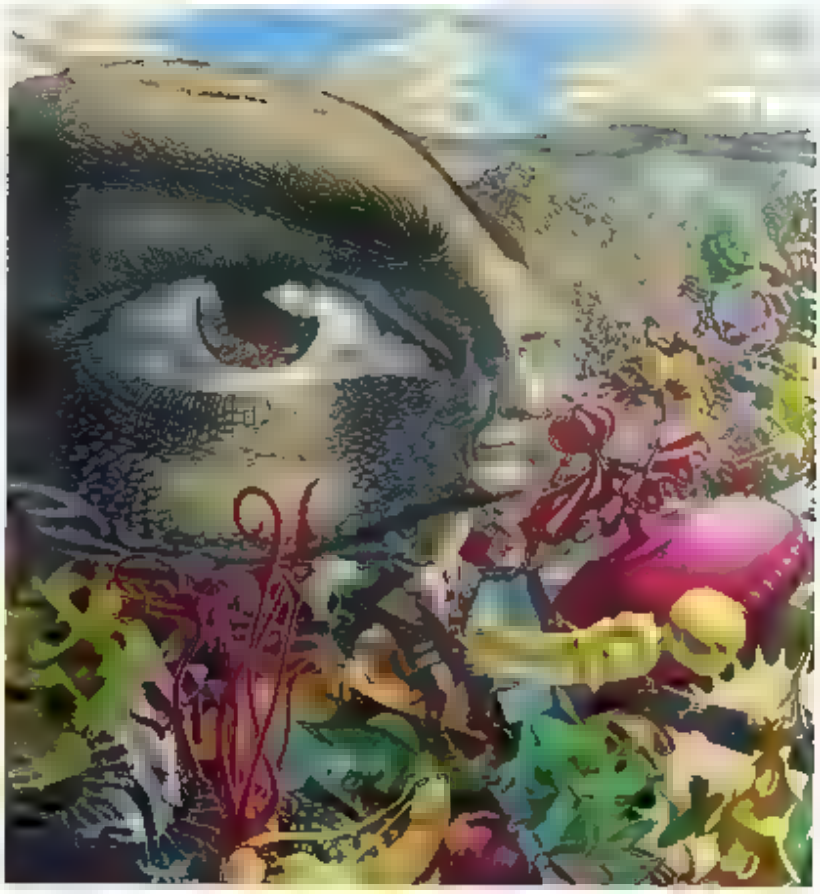
WILSON: In the prologue of your portfolio, *The Art and Imagery of Robt. Williams*, it mentioned that you were the art director for *Black Belt* magazine in the sixties. Did you learn karate?

ROBT WMS: No, — just — learned — be — strategy. The office was located across the street from a whorehouse.

WILSON: This is a question — got asked, let's see what you can do with it. Why all the sex and violence?

ROBT WMS: Well, if you mean a carnal obsession and a fascination with overt tragedy, yeah, that's me. Sex and violence is the wardrobe with which passion and reality are measured, whether — realize it or not. I — can't personally bear the responsibility that we live in a — monkey sex — cautionary-do world.

WILSON: Speaking of sex and violence, what are you trying to pull with these new rough paintings — you've been doing this year?



...ASSED IN THE ...AND IS ME FRIEND OF MINE ...ROB

...OF THE ...ROBERT'S LAMENT (1978)

Detail from T-shirt design

ROBT WMS What am I trying to pull? I'm trying to pull off my date with destiny, just like the rest of us. Maybe that means making enough money for old age or maybe it means sitting out on a tropical veranda with a couple of naked ladies drinking pina coladas in Jamaica. Well, see—

WILSON No, no. I don't mean your petty motivations. I'm asking about these hideous zombie monsters paintings.

ROBT WMS Well, granted they do show decapitations and rapes and what not, but I wouldn't call them hideous.

WILSON Don't you think a picture of a bellhop with his head up his ass being pulled around by his entrails by a naked lady is more than a little bit hideous? You have a right to subject the general public to that sort of stuff?

ROBT WMS Look, I don't like the general public subjecting me to their bullshit with their boring puppies, baby showers, pot-roast and one thing or another, but I wouldn't try to deprive those other people of their right of freedom of speech just because I have to paint what other people want. I'll end up painting puppies, chasing big barbarians and happy little elves.

WILSON Why don't you give us an idea of just what shape underground comics are in.

ROBT WMS Well, they were at their peak about '69. That's when I got the biggest Zap walls checks. When the Vietnam war was on, sales started slipping. People weren't as disgusted with the government anymore and didn't have much time for hemispheres of subversive entertainment like underground comix. Anyway, by that time everybody had been one hippies and were out growing flower power. Also there were too many comix. Everybody that could buy a rapidograph pen thought they were going to be the next Robert Crumb, so there were a lot of hard comics that came out. Then the comix showed its right wing tendency in installing an incompetent leader President Reagan. The backbone of the underground comix market has always been the head shops. Since Reagan's ultra-conservative administration has completely outlawed head shops. The evil may well be brought for this way of selling comix. I guess he sank and the status quo is going to continue. Judge Christopher has come up at this point. The undergrowth comix future looks pretty big hope coming. There seems to be a phenomenon popping up all over the country called The Comic Book Shop. The problem is that these new stores are so afraid of you don't know how to handle underground comics ever though there is certainly an enormous potential market for them. There is a whole new wave punk generation coming of age now that's just not going to be satisfied with Archie comics & the same old there's really a terrific new generational opening itself during hard economic times. The horrors although of super-hero titles were underage and sexist.

WILSON You're really slamming liberal yourself.

ROBT WMS True, but I'm not quite as pernicious as Chris was with Caesar either.

Bottom detail from
A DEVIL WITH A HAMMER
A HELL WITH A FORCE (1/2)

...LL IT TO THOSE CRAFTSMEN
...WARA ...

I'M AGE

SHE WALKED ONE
MILE
AFTER MILE

SHE WALKED DAY
AFTER DAY

IF THE MOON
IS CRESCENT
SHE
DID
FREE
HER SIDE
OF THE
WORLD

AND AFTER TWO WEEKS DECIDED THAT
SURELY SHE HAD WALKED TO THE OTHER
SIDE OF THE WORLD

IV

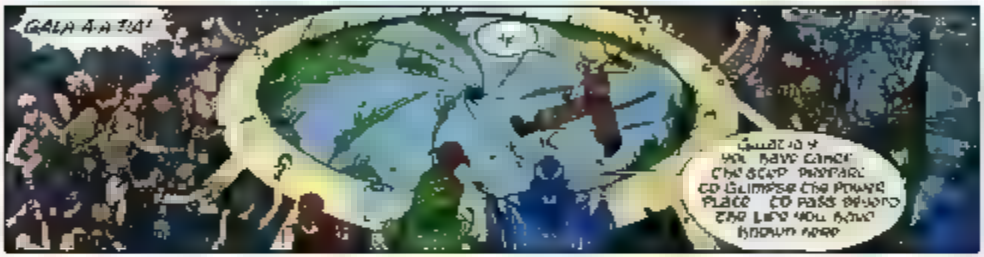
AN

STARSTRUCK

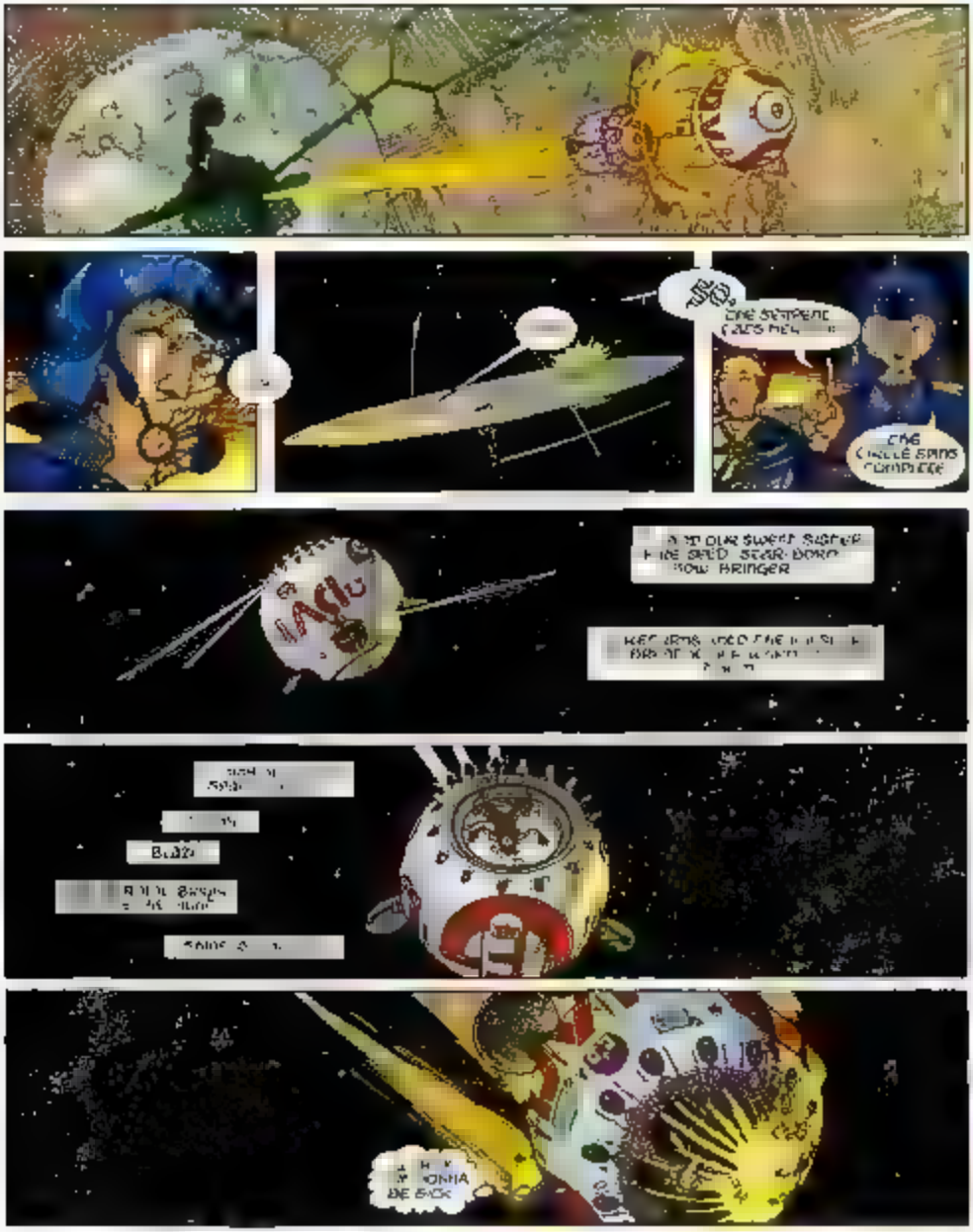
WRITTEN BY ELAINE LEE ILLUSTRATED BY M. W. KALUTA
LETTERED BY TODD KLEIN

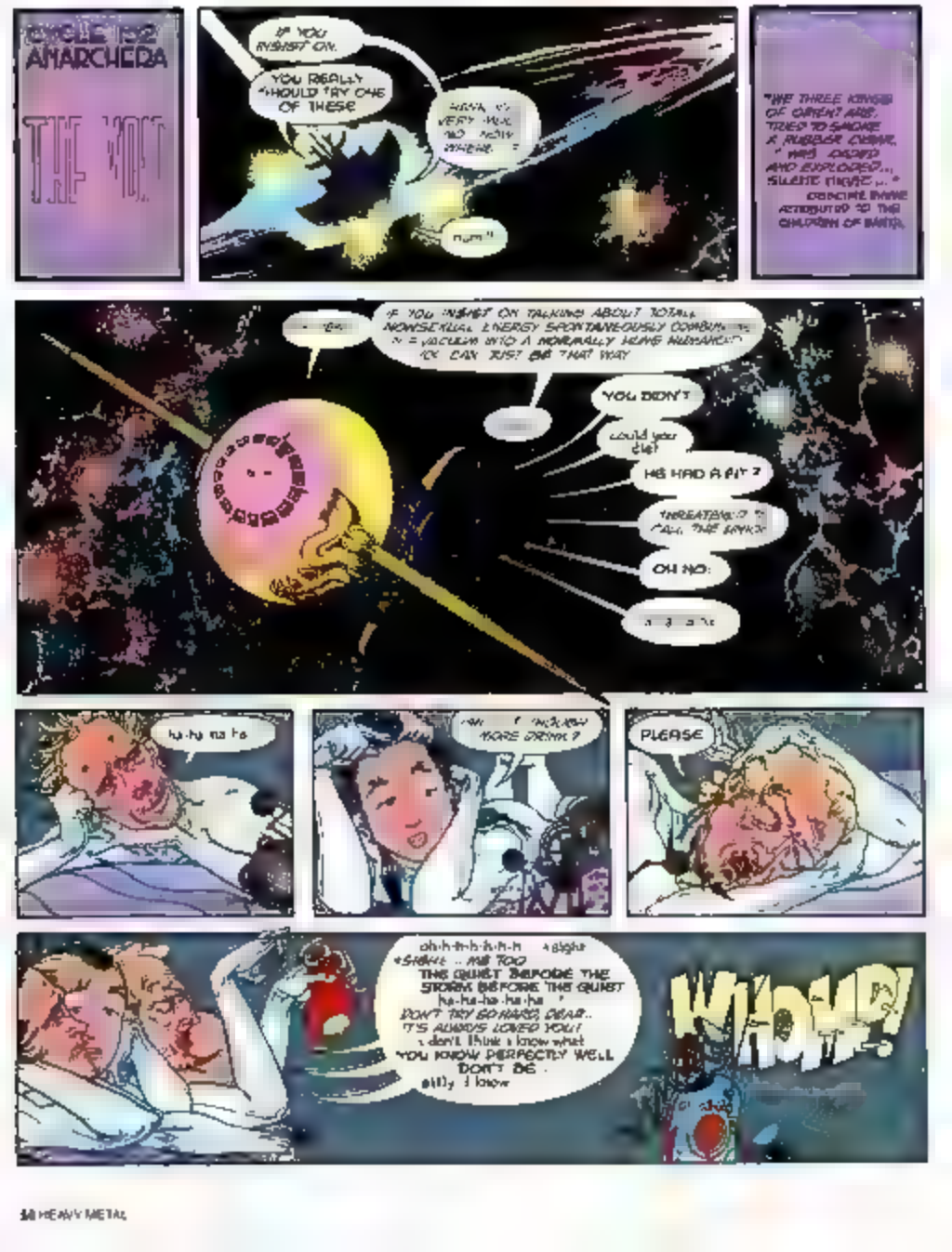
AFTER WRESTLING AN ATAVISTIC BANG-BANG BY THE NECK OF OMEGA, CALISTA'S WAS BROUGHT INTO THE CIRCLE AND MADE A SISTER BY THE PEACEFUL WOMEN OF THE PLANET

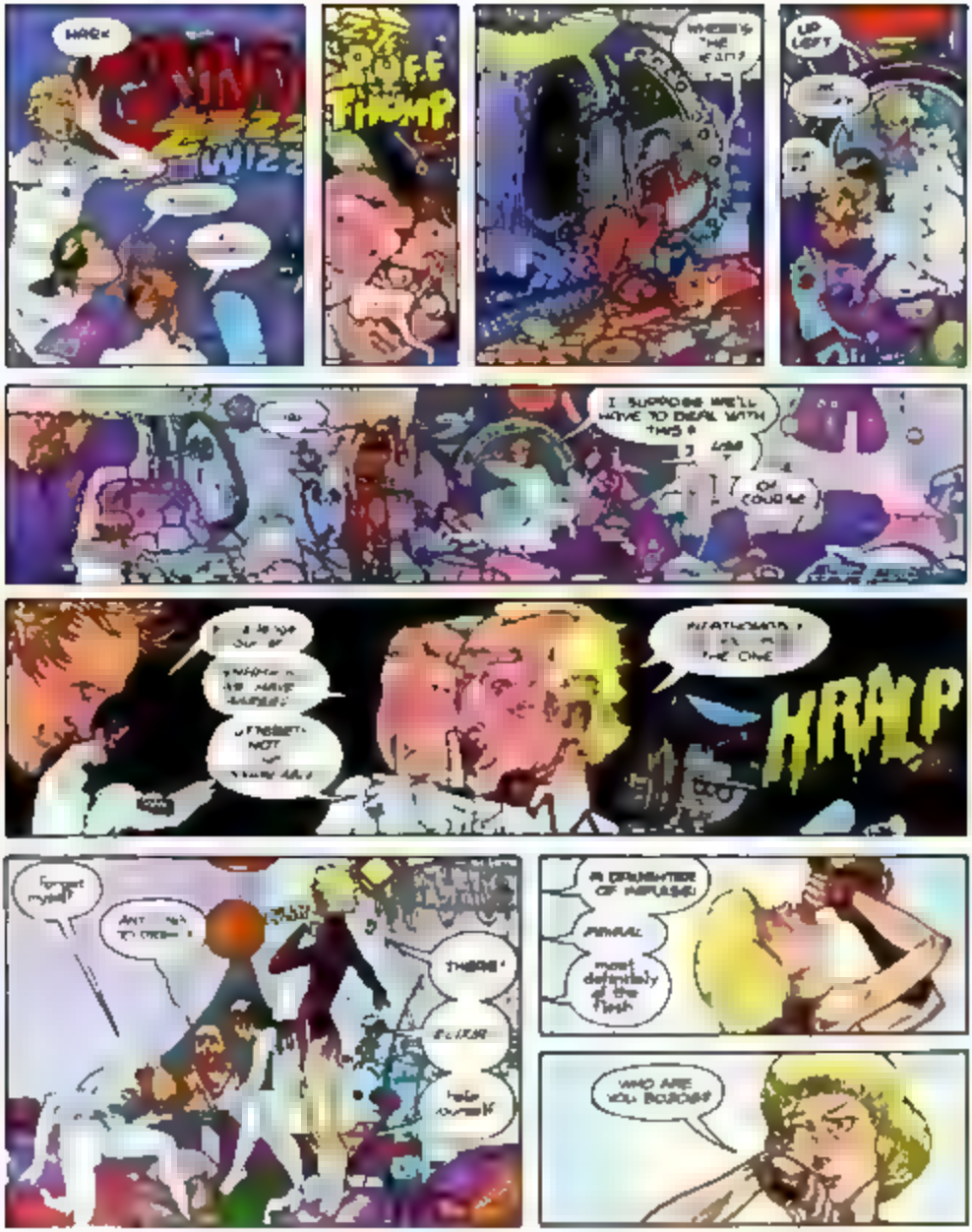
THIS I SWEAR ON MY MOTHER'S WOMB, THEE -
WHAT?!
ALL BETWEEN PALM AND PALM BELONGS TO THE MOTHER
ALL BETWEEN PALM AND PALM BELONGS TO THE MOTHER



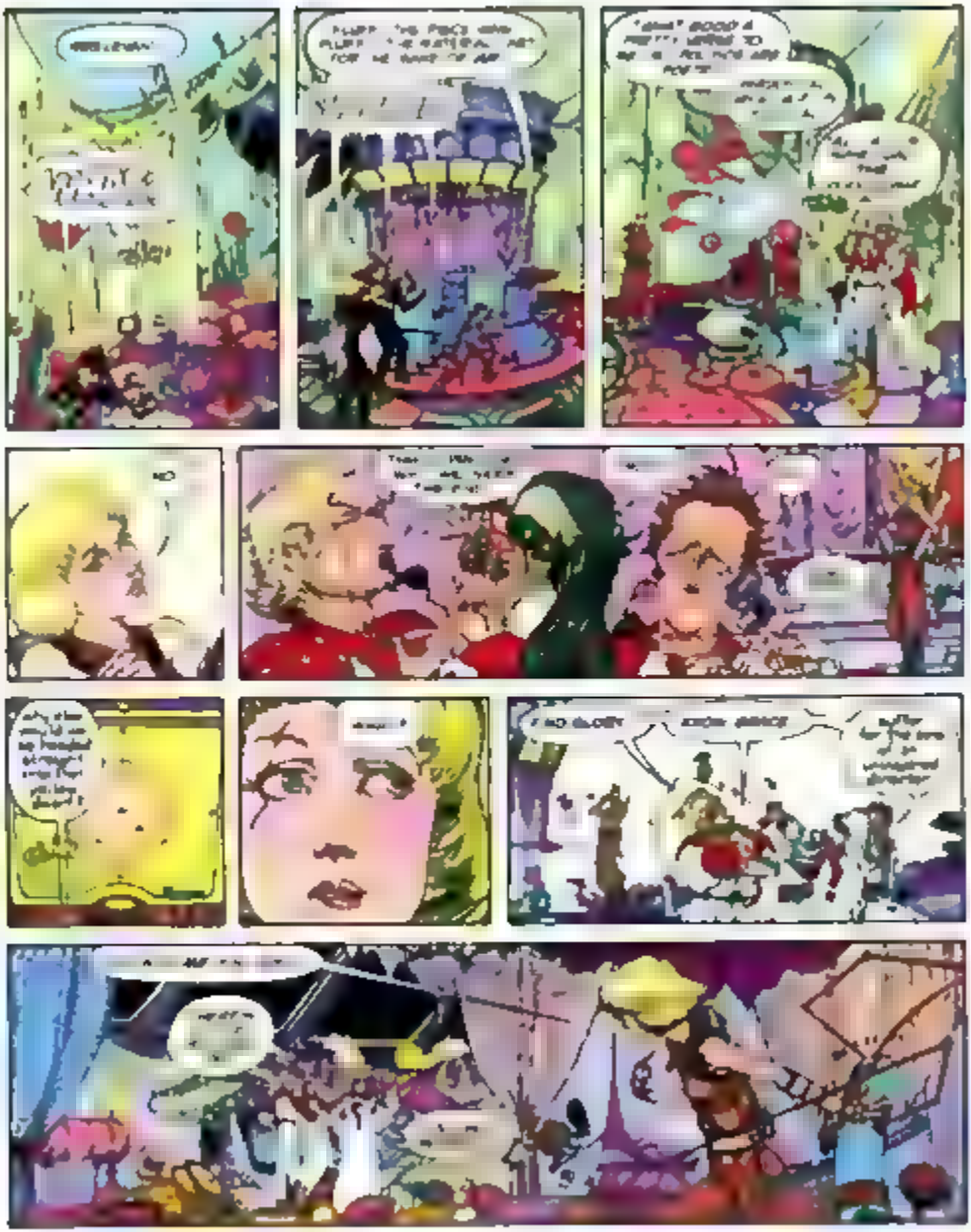
WHERE'D SHE GO?
HARD.
WHAT HAPPENED?
OH? YEAH!
I AM
THIS RIGHT?
WHERE IS THE
COME BACK
WHRRIIRRIIRR
BOOF
KLUK
RUMMBLE
KUH TOOM!

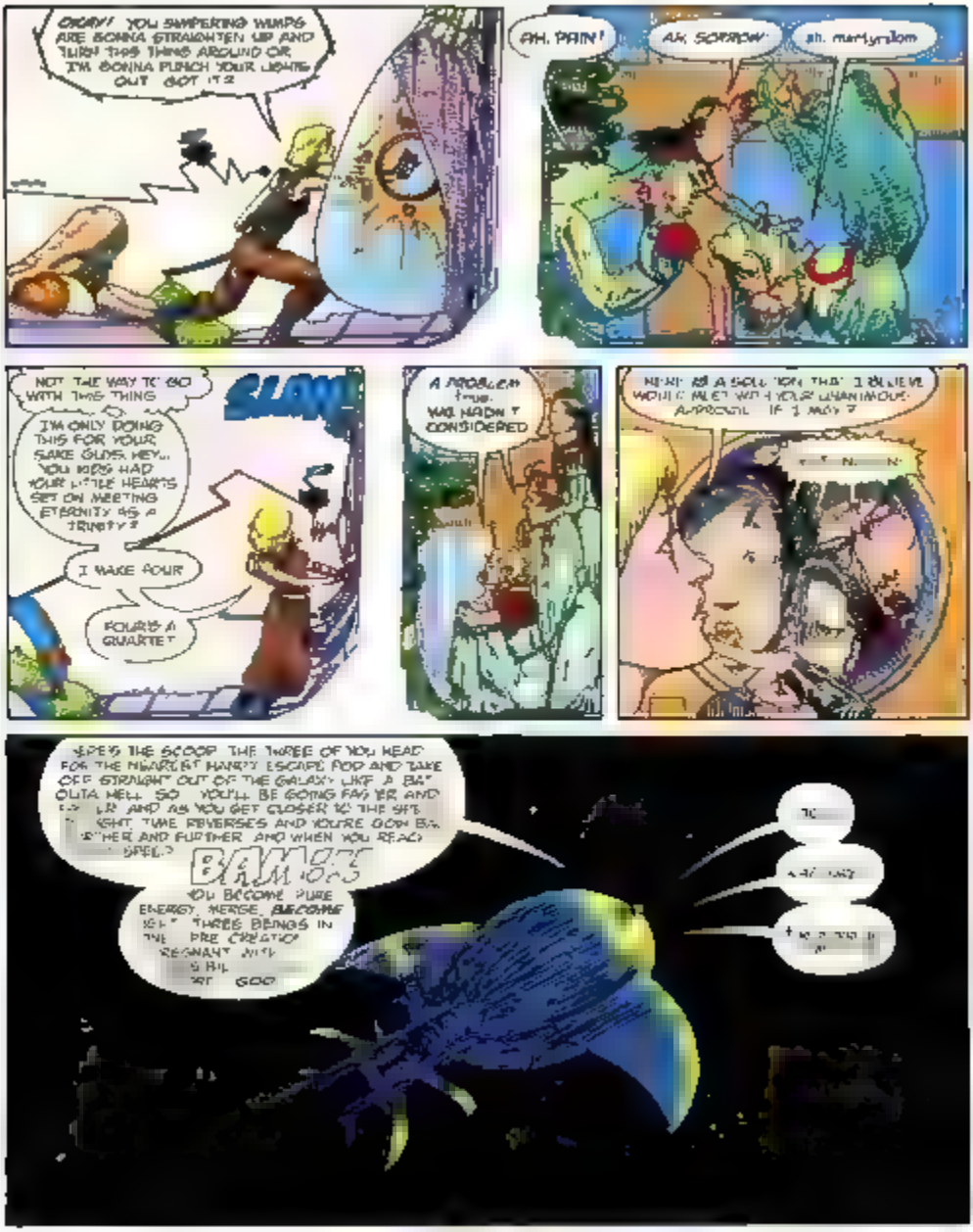

ONE SERPENT
CAGE CIRCLE SPINS
COMPLETE
BUZZ
I'M GONNA
BE BACK


CYCLE 52
ANARCHERA
THE VOID
IF YOU INSIST ON.
YOU REALLY SHOULD TRY ONE OF THESE
"WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE, TRIED TO SMOKE A RUBBER CHIMNEY, IT WAS OKAY AND EXPLODED... SILENT NIGHT..." CONCRETE WAVE ATTRIBUTED TO THE CHILDREN OF BATH.
IF YOU INSIST ON TALKING ABOUT TOTAL NONSEXUAL ENERGY SPONTANEOUSLY COMBUSTING IN A VACUUM INTO A NORMALLY MUNDANE MUNDANE CAN JUST BE THAT WAY
YOU DON'T
COULD YOU DIE?
HE HAD A PIT ?
THREATENING TO CALL THE BANK
OH NO!
ha-ha ha-ha
MORE DRINK ?
PLEASE
oh-h-h-h-h-h-h a sigh
SHHH .. ME TOO
THE QUIET BEFORE THE STORM BEFORE THE QUIET
ha-ha-ha-ha-ha
DON'T TRY SO HARD, DEAR.. IT'S ALWAYS LOVED YOU!
I don't think I know what
YOU KNOW PERFECTLY WELL DON'T BE
silly I know
WHOMP!

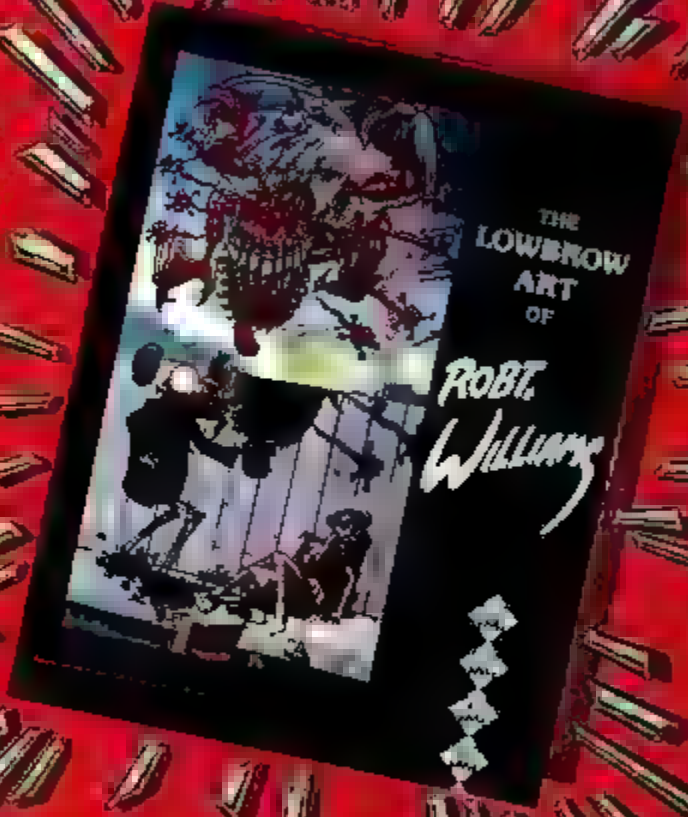

WHOA!
WIZZ
THUMP
WHERE'S THE KID?
UP LEFT
I SUPPOSE WE'LL HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS
OF COURSE
KRALP
A DEMENTED OF IMPULSE!
ANIMAL
most definitely of the flesh
WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE?

CLIK
CLIK
CLIK




OKAY! YOU SNIVELING WIMPS ARE GONNA STRAIGHTEN UP AND TURN THIS THING AROUND OR I'M GONNA PUNCH YOUR LIGHTS OUT GOT IT?
AH, PAIN!
AH, SORROW
ah, martyrdom
NOT THE WAY TO GO WITH THIS THING
SLAM!
I'M ONLY DOING THIS FOR YOUR SAKE GUYS, HEY... YOU BOYS HAD YOUR LITTLE HEARTS SET ON MEETING ETERNITY AS A TRINITY?
I WAKE FOUR
FOURS A QUARTET
A PROBLEM I HAD NOT CONSIDERED
HERE IS A SOLUTION THAT I BELIEVE WOULD MEET WITH YOUR UNANIMOUS APPROVAL IF I MAY?
SPEED THE SCOOP THE THREE OF YOU HEAD FOR THE NEAREST HANDY ESCAPE POD AND TAKE OFF STRAIGHT OUT OF THE GALAXY LIKE A BAT OUTA HELL SO YOU'LL BE GOING FASTER AND FARTHER AND AS YOU GET CLOSER TO THE SPEED OF LIGHT TIME REVERSES AND YOU'RE GOIN BACKWARDS FARTHER AND FARTHER AND WHEN YOU REACH THE SPEED
BAM!
YOU BECOME PURE ENERGY MERGE BECOME ONE THREE BEINGS IN THE PRE CREATION REGIMENT WITH SHIVA AT GOD

ANNOUNCING!!!.....



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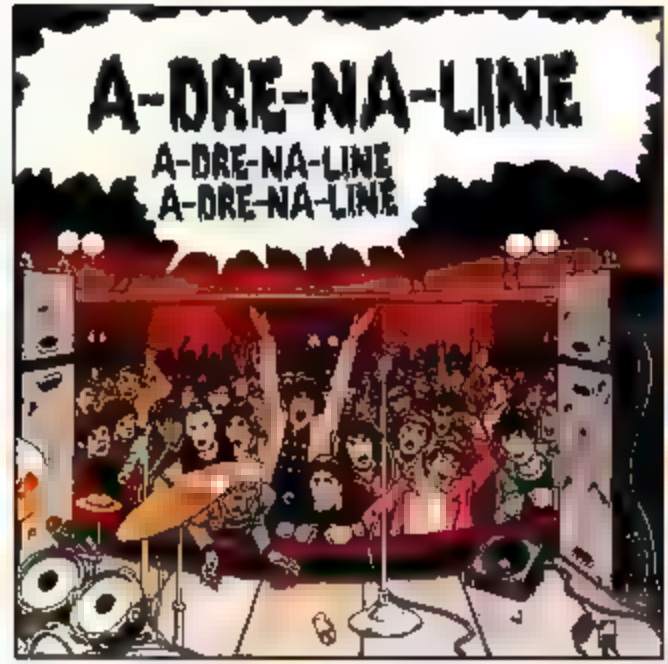

A-DRE-NA-LINE
A-DRE-NA-LINE
A-DRE-NA-LINE

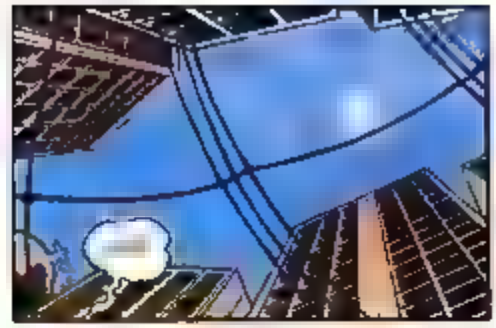
SHARK, YOUR MANAGER HAS BEEN WAITING FOR YOU DO YOU FIND ADRENA
WE HAVE TO CANCEL EVERYTHING ADRENALINE HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED

WHERE DO YOU HEAR THAT?
READ THIS LETTER

WE HAVE KIDNAPPED ADRENALINE SHE WILL BE BROUGHT BACK TO YOU SAFE AND SOUND IF YOU DO THE FOLLOWING AS YOU'S MALE ROBOTS WILL RELEASE HER ON THE 5TH AT 11AM, BEHIND FACTS, IF YOU OR ANY THE ROBOTS AND REMEMBER BE CHEERLET OR YOU'LL NEVER SEE HER AGAIN
OH NO

WHERE ARE WE GOING AGAIN?
WE HAVE TO TRY AND FIND SOME BOSONS, OR WE WON'T HAVE A CHANCE
WE HAVE TWO DAYS TO FIND HER THAT SHOULD GIVE US MUCH TIME
BUT WHAT ARE WE GOING TOWARDS THE AIRPORT?
TO TAKE A FLIGHT
THE MUSCLE CAR IS THE SUPERLUXE MODEL OF THE CATANIA ROBOTICS LINE
HEY THERE ARE YOU STILL ON A JET FOR THE CATANIA EXPRESS?
HEY I HEARD A GOING LIKE HOME
OH YEAH
OH NO
YEAH THAT WHAT ARE YOU KNOWING ABOUT
AND WE HAVE
FINE SO GUYS, START CHOKING UP MORE GAS AND I GRAB A SHOOT FULL OF SAUCE WITH THE CRISPIES
AT L ASE OFF OF CRAIN

SEX



ADRENALINE
THE ROCKBOTS
Tiger

END

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THE CAVE IN DAY.
EXCEPT THE SAND, THE LAND AND THE ANIMALS.
AND WHEN NIGHT CAME
SO ONE SAW HER PASS.
EXCEPT THE SAND, THE LAND, AND THE ANIMALS.

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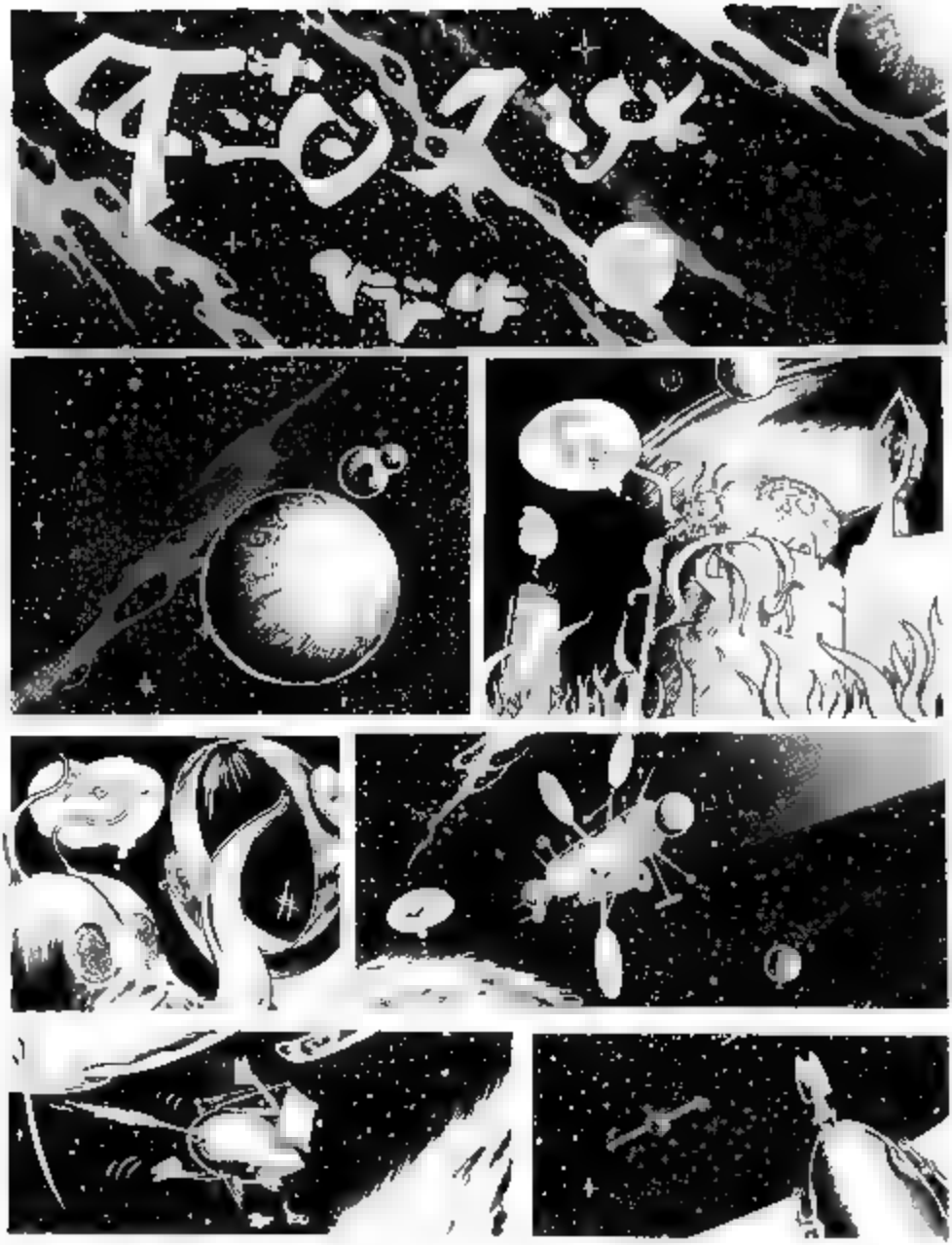

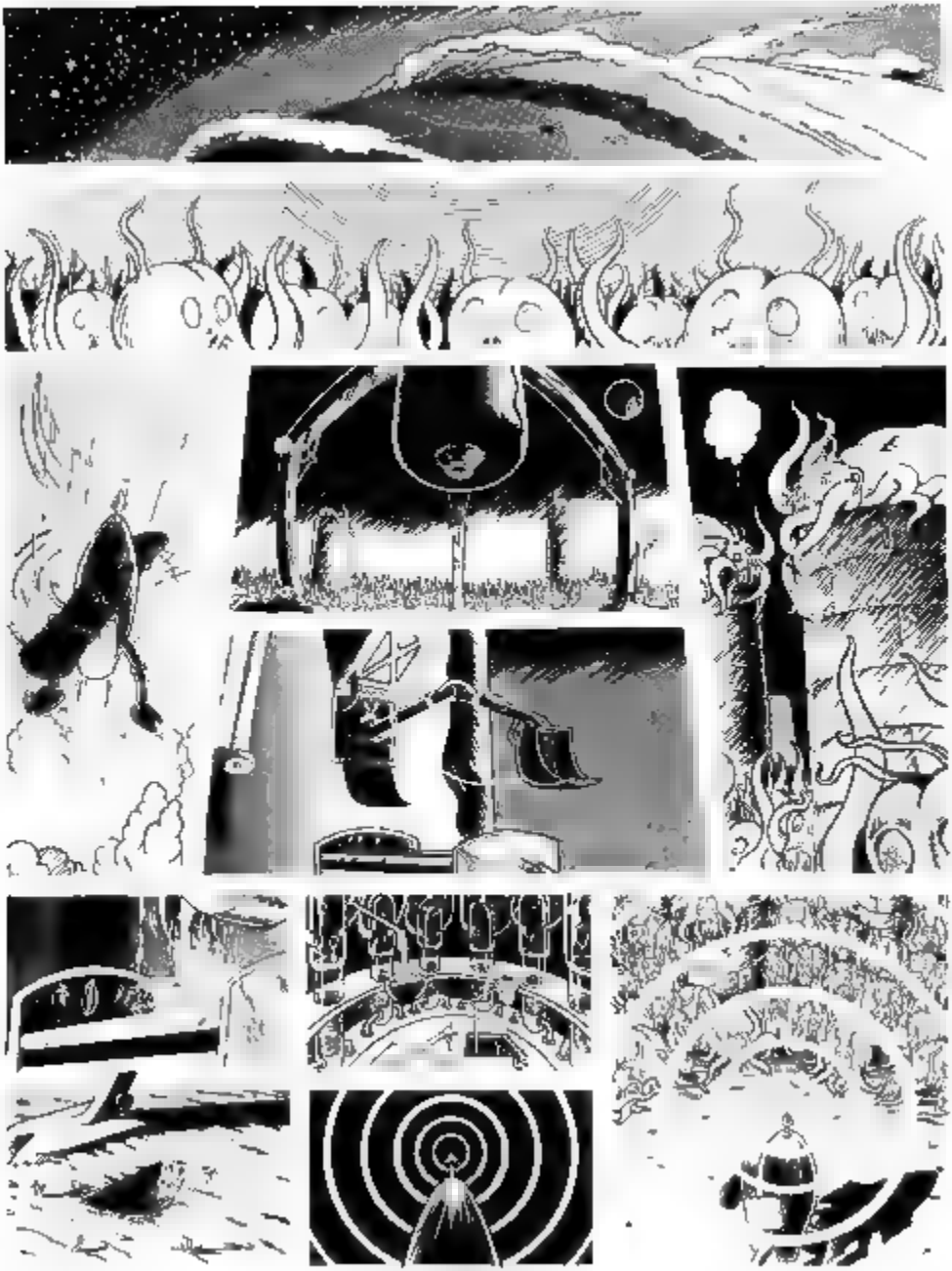

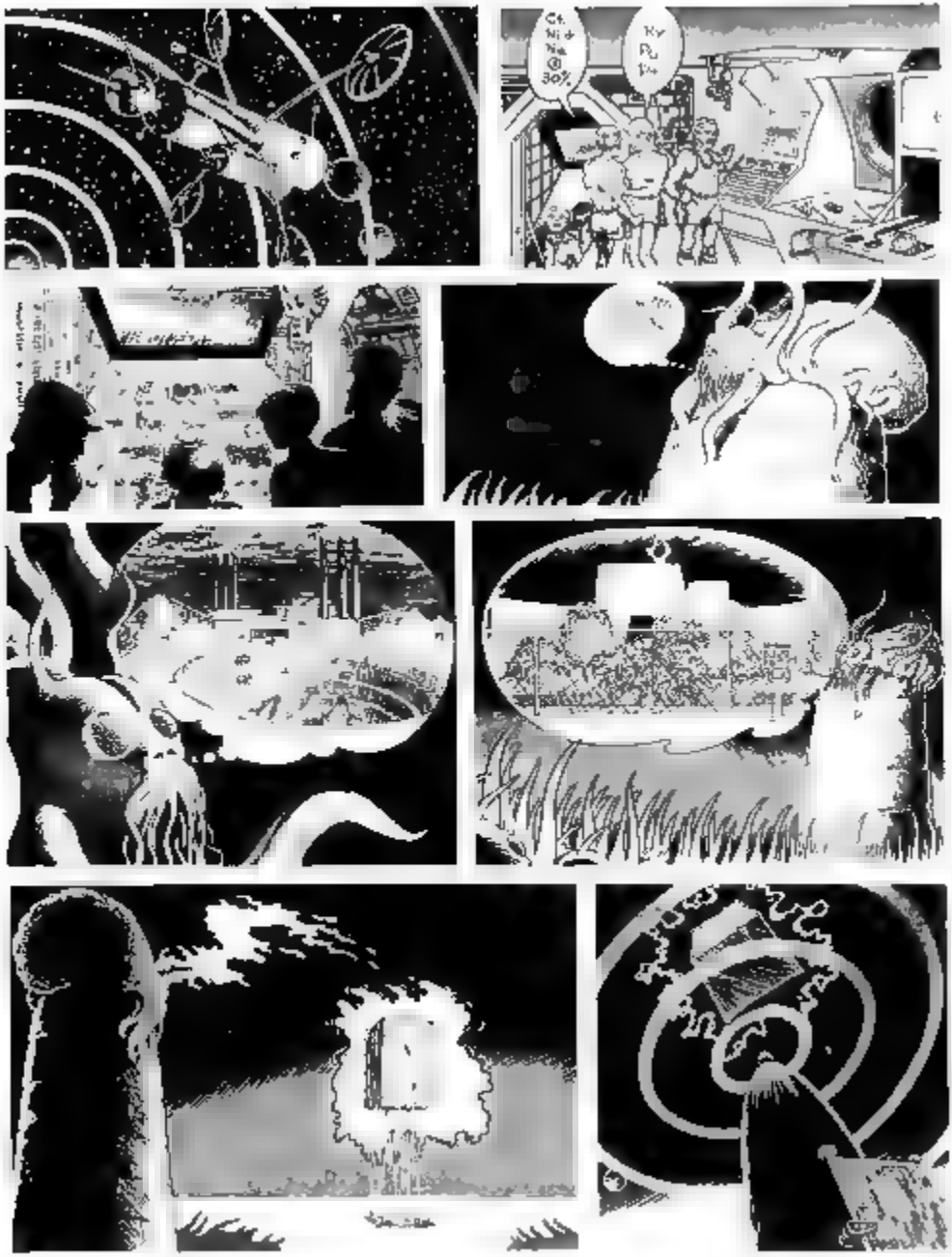
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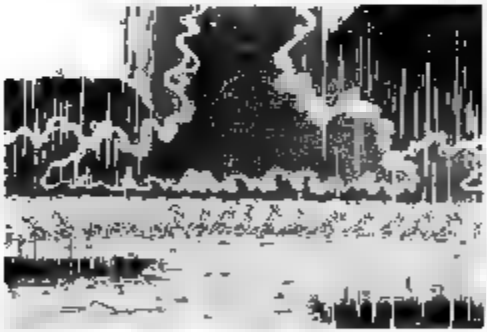

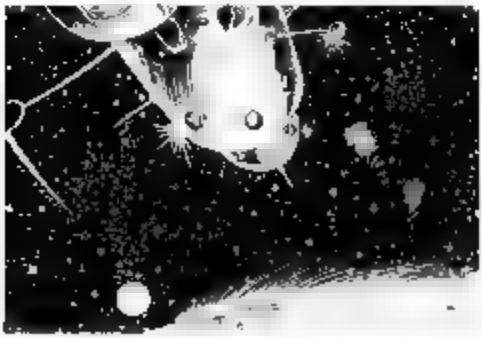

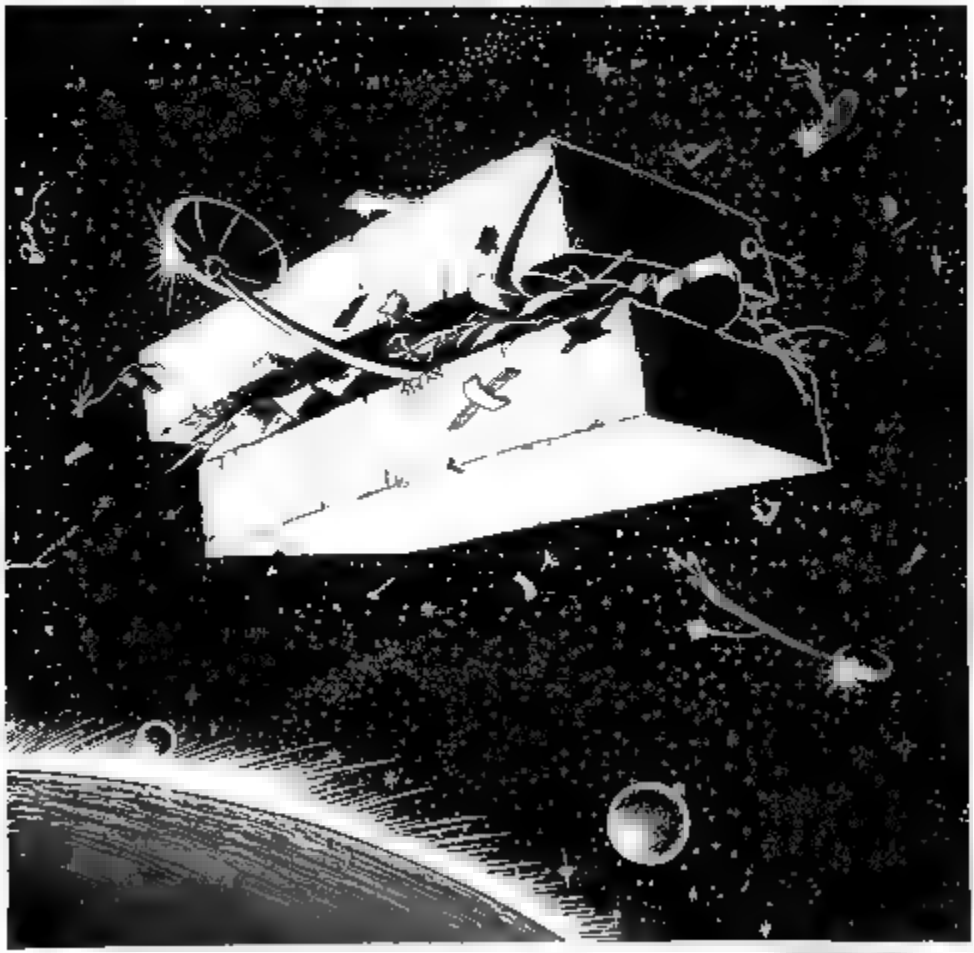

'Rippingly Good'

Timothy R. Lucas on *Splatter Movies*

'Good photographs and well-written text' Lois Rubin, *Classic Images*

'Informative and interesting commentary' Robert Sheckley, *Twilight Zone*

'Charts the escalation of gore in horror films...with humor, perception, and, best of all, accuracy' Carlos Clarens, *Soho News*

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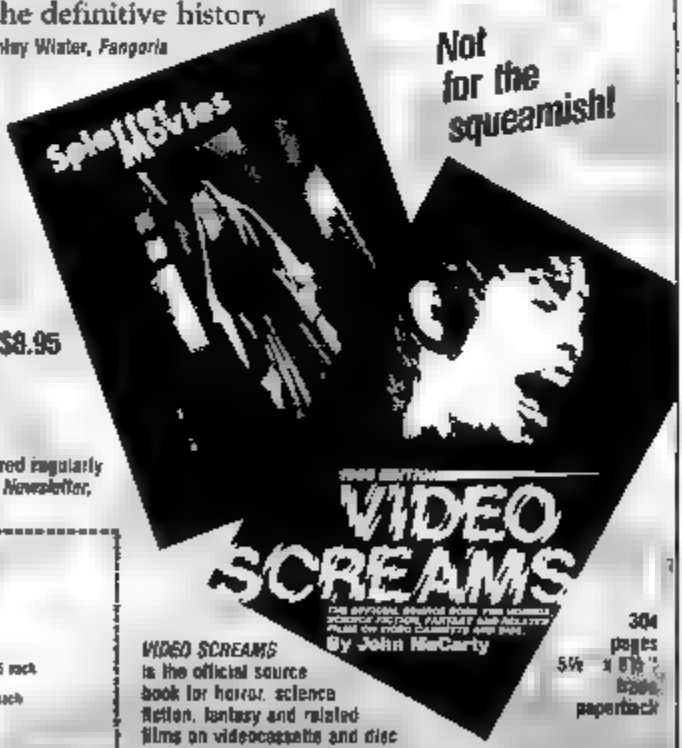
'McCarty knows what he's talking about... *Splatter Movies* is the definitive history of the gore film' Stanley Wiater, *Fangoria*



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HELLFIRE
Kenneth Smith

Goddammit, you always make it so hard for us to do our job.
If we were meant to be demons, then torture and sadism would be fulfilling for us and hell would be heaven—to us.
Well, hell if I know—maybe we were meant to be angels and being demons is really frustrating. Maybe we are practicing self-denial all day and only think we are happy. I really don't give a damn.

Or maybe that's what hell is, not giving a damn. Hell is not being able to care.
Or maybe my idea was the clue—maybe hell is freedom, having infinite choice but no preference. No sense of direction. Hell is indecision.
Hell is not knowing what hell is.
Hell is having you around for an assistant!

YOU WON'T FIND THESE MAGAZINES ON ANY NEWSSTAND

DEJA-VU #1

GATES OF EDEN #1

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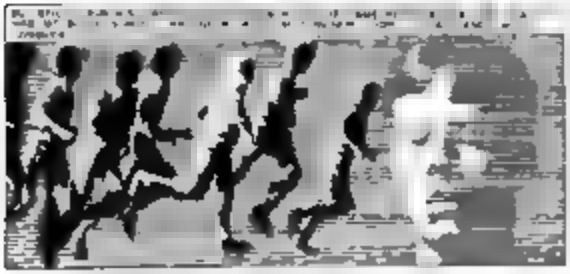
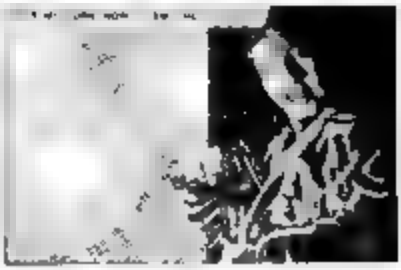
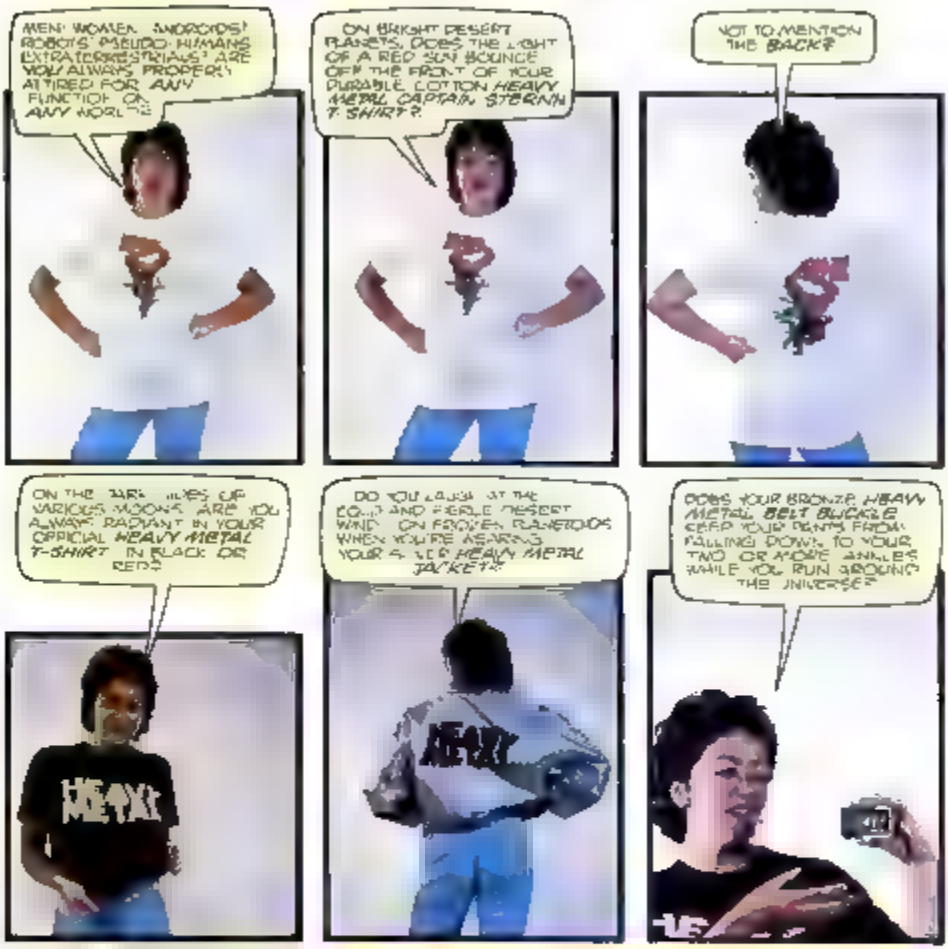
JUNE 2050

BY ANDREW SIMMONS
ILLUSTRATED BY NICK CUTI






MEN! WOMEN! ANDROIDS! ROBOTS! PSEUDO-HUMANS! EXTRATERRESTRIALS! ARE YOU ALWAYS PROPERLY ATTIRED FOR ANY FUNCTION ON ANY WORLD?
ON BRIGHT DESERT PLANETS, DOES THE LIGHT OF A RED SUN BOUNCE OFF THE FRONT OF YOUR DURABLE COTTON HEAVY METAL CAPTAIN STERNN T-SHIRT?
NOT TO MENTION THE BACK?
ON THE MOONS OF VARIOUS MOONS ARE YOU ALWAYS RADIANT IN YOUR OFFICIAL HEAVY METAL T-SHIRT IN BLACK OR RED?
METAL
DO YOU LAUGH AT THE COLD AND FEARLESS DESERT WIND ON FROZEN PLANETOIDS WHEN YOU'RE WEARING YOUR 6.5 OZ HEAVY METAL JACKET?
METAL
DOES YOUR BRONZE HEAVY METAL BELT BUCKLE KEEP YOUR PANTS FROM FALLING DOWN TO YOUR TWO OR MORE ANKLES WHILE YOU RUN AROUND THE UNIVERSE?
METAL
WELL IF YOU HAD FOUR TENTACLES AROUND A PAIR OF SCISSORS AND CLIP THIS COUPON & ORDER YOUR HEAVY METAL APPAREL TODAY!
OR HOP IN A TIME MACHINE AND GO BACK AND ORDER HM-WEAR YESTERDAY!
METAL

HEAVY METAL, DEPT. 1082
635 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10022

PLEASE SEND ME THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

CAPTAIN STERNN T-SHIRTS. ___ SMALL ___ MEDIUM ___ LARGE AT $6.00 EACH PLUS $1.50 FOR POSTAGE AND HANDLING.

HEAVY METAL T-SHIRTS. SMALL ___ MEDIUM ___ LARGE AT $7.00 EACH. (POSTAGE AND HANDLING ARE INCLUDED IN PRICE.)

HEAVY METAL JACKETS. SMALL ___ MEDIUM ___ LARGE AT $50.00 EACH. (POSTAGE AND HANDLING ARE INCLUDED IN PRICE.)

HEAVY METAL BELT BUCKLES AT $10.95 EACH. (POSTAGE AND HANDLING ARE INCLUDED IN PRICE.)

NEW YORK STATE RESIDENTS ADD APPLICABLE SALES TAX.
TOTAL ENCLOSED ___

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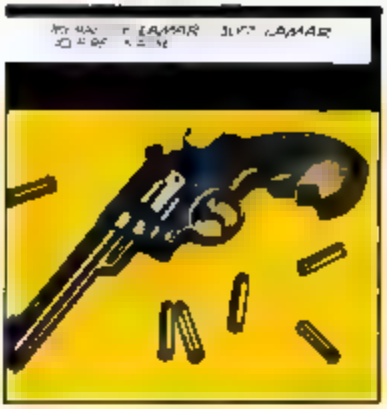
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BOB SMITH



AT ONE TIME, I DEVOTED MY EXPERTISE TO ONES THE MENTALLY ILL AND THE DERANGED THAT'S WHY THEY CALLED ME "THE KILLER OF FOOLS". I'M A LITTLE RUSTED. PLEASE NOW, I'LL KILL ANYBODY FOR A BEER AND A HOT CUP OF COFFEE

LAMAR: KILLER OF FOOLS

TEXT BY P. SETBON · ILLUSTRATED BY P. POIRIER

YOU'RE KILLING MY EARDRUMS, OLD MAN. LOWER YOUR VOICE
I DON'T BEEN FOLLOWED FOR DAYS. THESE WEIRD GUYS DRESSED IN BLACK. THEY WALK LIKE ROBOTS

CALL THE POLICE MY FRIEND I AM A KILLER BY TRADE, NOT A DETECTIVE
I WILL GIVE YOU $200,000- CASH!
THERE'S ALWAYS POSSIBLE TO CHANGE OCCUPATIONS, EVEN AT MY AGE

WE HAVE BEGUN OUR DESCENT TO MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT PLEASE FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELTS AND EXTINGUISH ALL
I SHOULD BE DONE IN TWO OR THREE DAYS THEN I'LL BE ABLE TO BUY THAT NICE LITTLE RED JAGUAR I'VE BEEN DRAWING AT MY POCKET FOR SO LONG
MR LAMAR MR LAMAR! SIR, ME I THOUGHT I'D PICK YOU UP MYSELF
THEY THEY'VE FOLLOWED ME TO THE AIRPORT I FEEL BETTER JUST SEEING YOU IN THE FLESH
YES? THAT JUS DAMITY NO ONE HAS EVER TALKED TO ME LIKE THAT BEFORE "WISMO"
237 237 NO! NOW PUT THAT GUN AWAY AND PUT YOUR MASK BACK ON DAMN PILE OF MESS! YOU'LL HEAR FROM ME TONIGHT

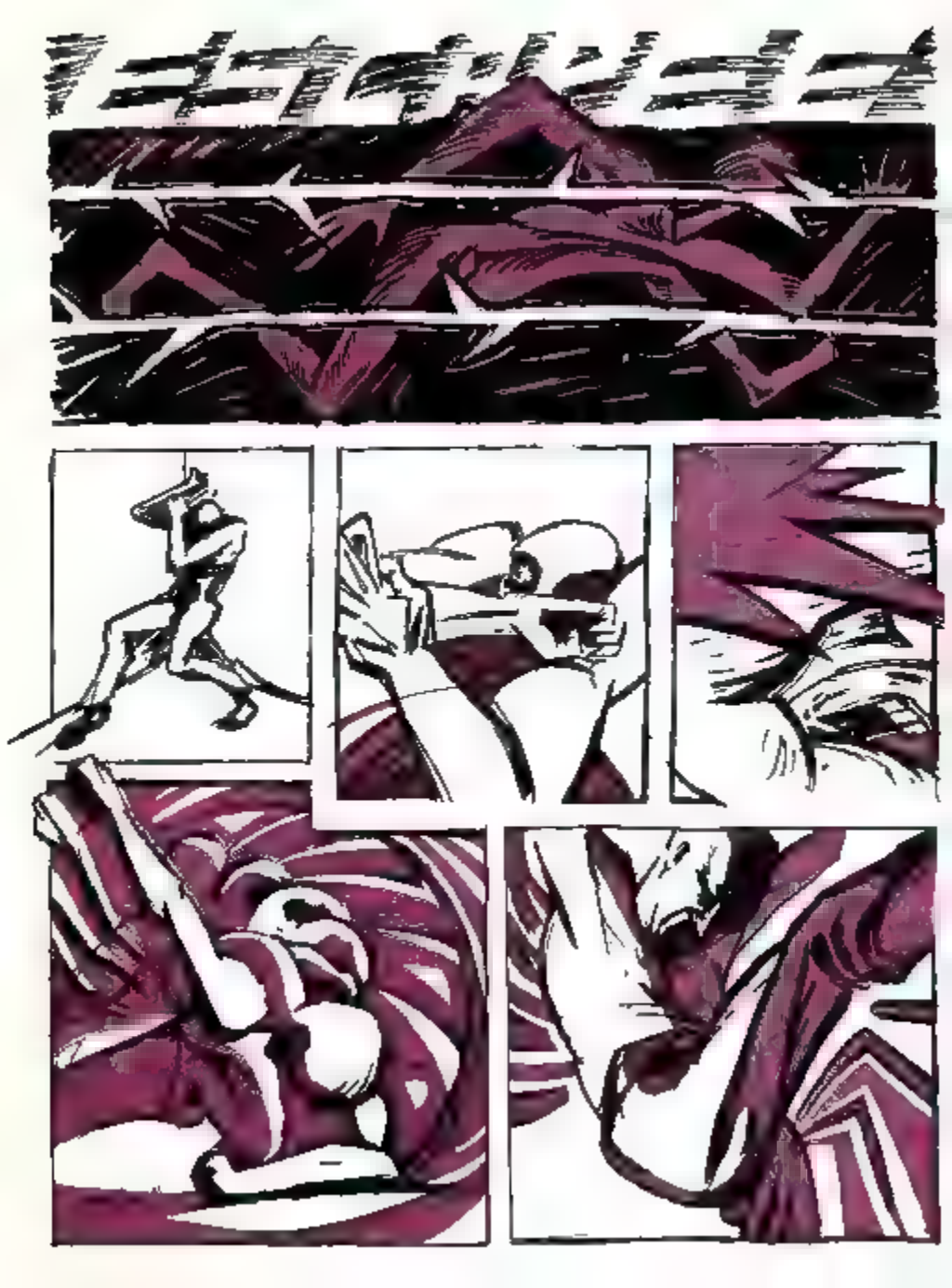
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY WANT J IN ME 'S BEEN WILLBAS' HON HEY! LOOK! WE'RE BEING FOLLOWED
...OH, KOKI, I SET " E PIA(OFFEUS"
HEY, LAMAR, THEY'RE PLANNING AUTO US!
PERFECT! BRING ME THE KILLER AND LET THE OTHER ONE COOK!

GOOD LORD! AN ACCIDENT WHERE THE ELAN ?
HELLO SIR WELCOME TO OUR HOUSE WOULD YOU LIKE A MASSAGE
EVEN IF I'M ALRIGHT, MR JAMES ? DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT MYSELF I AM LOUIS FARGO SCIENTIST, PROFESSOR, AND POET
I USED THAT POOR MR WIGGS TO GET YOU TO COME O MIGHTY SAY AFRAID THAT I AM A SPOILED CHILD ALWAYS NEED HIS TOYS HAHAHAHA
AND THIS NEW TOY TO ME?
I'VE BEEN MAKING THESE ROBOTS SINCE I WAS A CHILD AT TIMES I THEM WANTED A MORE ALIVE AND DANGEROUS TOY

YES, I NEED A MAN LIKE YOU, AN UNCONTROLLABLE TOY, FOR THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME IN THE WORLD
WE'RE GOING TO PLAY "WEST ERN". DO YOU LIKE WESTERNS?
WE NEED A GOOD DIRECTOR AND CAPABLE ACTORS, ESPECIALLY FOR THE FINAL DUEL
HAHAHA, YOU MISUNDERSTAND QUICKLY, MR LAMAR
BUT, I'M USED TO CRAZY PEOPLE
BUT, YOU'VE GOT ME ALL WRONG. I'M NOT CRAZY. I'M A GENIUS, MY ROBOTS ARE FIFTY YEARS AHEAD OF THEIR TIME. I SIMPLY WANT TO HAVE A LITTLE FUN. GET YOURSELF READY!

BLAM!
BLAM!
PTENGG!!
AHHHH ONE POINT FOR YOU, MR LAMAR
I HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE! THIS SMELLS LIKE A TRAP!
KLONGG
KA-BLAM
BLAM!
CRRASH
BLAM!
TCHKLINGG!
QUICKLY NOW, THE OTHERS WILL FOLLOW

MR LAWAL. WAIT! YOU'RE OUT OF DANGER NOW.
WAIT A SECOND, MR FARISO! IT'S REALLY ME THIS TIME. YOU WERE BRILLIANT
THANKS TO YOU, I WAS ABLE TO FULFIL MY OLDEST DREAM: TO SEE MY OWN DEATH. I WAS QUITE THRILLED!
HERE'S A SCREENPLAY IS REALLY VERY SKILL. YOU KNOW, OF BUT THIS KID-NAPPING, THIS DUEL HUGE SHOT! I AM IOT. THANK YOU EARLIER HERE'S YOUR PAYMENT FOR YOUR HART-WORK
THANK YOU MR FARISO GLAD TO HAVE AMUSED YOU. IN EXCHANGE FOR THE KIDNAP-PING THE ACCIDENT, THE BULLET IN MY ARM
HE YOU TO HAVE A FREE SOURS.
BDAM!
END



HEAVY METAL COLLECTOR'S ITEMS

#1 APRIL 77 SORRY SOLD OUT

#2/MAY 77 [illegible]

#3 JUNE 77 [illegible]

#4/JULY 77 [illegible]

#5/AUGUST 77 [illegible]

#6/SEPTEMBER 77 [illegible]

#7/OCTOBER 77 [illegible]

#8/NOVEMBER 77 [illegible]

#9/DECEMBER 77 [illegible]

#10 JANUARY 78 [illegible]

#11 FEBRUARY 78 [illegible]

#12 MARCH 78 [illegible]

#13 APRIL 78 [illegible]

#14 MAY 78 [illegible]

#15 JUNE 78 [illegible]

#16/JULY 78 [illegible]

#17 AUGUST 78 SORRY SOLD OUT

#18/SEPTEMBER 78 SORRY SOLD OUT

#19/OCTOBER 78 [illegible]

#20 NOVEMBER 78 [illegible]

#21 DECEMBER 78 [illegible]

#22/JANUARY 79 [illegible]

#23 FEBRUARY 79 [illegible]

#24/MARCH 79 [illegible]

#25/APRIL 79 SORRY SOLD OUT

#26/MAY 79 [illegible]

#27 JUNE 79 SORRY SOLD OUT

#28 JULY 79 [illegible]

#29 AUGUST 79 [illegible]

#30 SEPTEMBER 79 [illegible]

#31 OCTOBER 79 [illegible]

#32/NOVEMBER 79 [illegible]

#33/DECEMBER 79 [illegible]

#34 JANUARY 80 [illegible]

#35/FEBRUARY 80 [illegible]

#36/MARCH 80 [illegible]

#37 APRIL 80 [illegible]

#38 MAY 80 [illegible]

#39 JUNE 80 [illegible]

#40/JULY 80 [illegible]

#41 AUGUST 80 [illegible]

#42 SEPTEMBER 80 [illegible]

#43 OCTOBER [illegible] SORRY SOLD OUT

#44 NOVEMBER 80 [illegible]

#45/DECEMBER 80 [illegible]

#46 JANUARY [illegible] SORRY SOLD OUT

#47 FEBRUARY [illegible]

#48/MARCH 81 [illegible]

Printed in Belgium

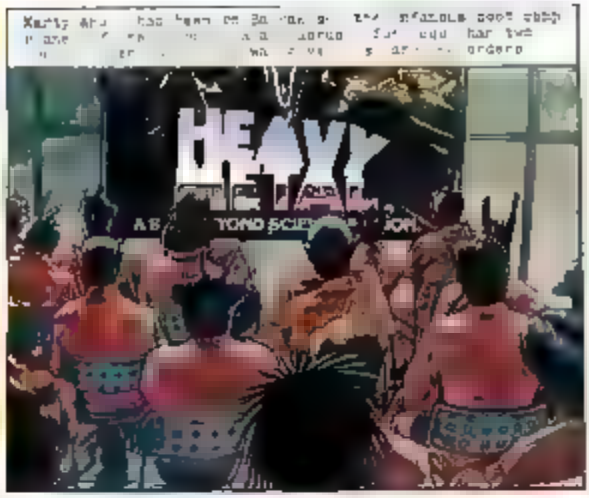
#43 MARCH 83 Wrath in Rapier Robe and the Ambassador of the Shadows are now On Sale's interpretation of Bradbury's classic Chronicles page. Plus Harlan Ellison's page-long tale of Sleeping Beauties.

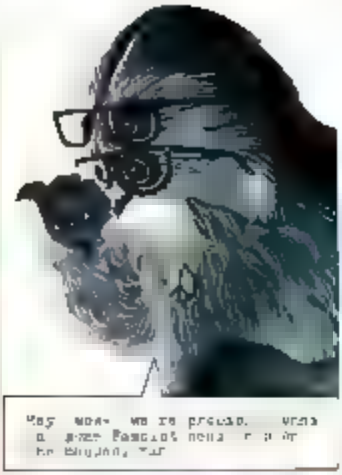
#44 APRIL 83 [illegible] Nazis, Cyclops, Bloodstone, Conan, Good Bye Caliban, Harry Nicholas, Stories from pages gone by, Vampires in the Jungle, Rapier, Dracula, Frankenstein, and the Wolf Man and more.

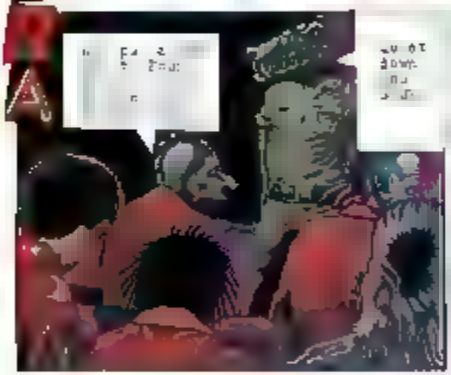
#45/MAY 83 Highlights of Chaykin's Cage, Kaluta's and Bolton's Wraparounds, Pete Poplaski's Dark Horse, Page after page of Chaykin and Wrightson, Blue Boy's Bar and Grill, and Starlin's Warlock.

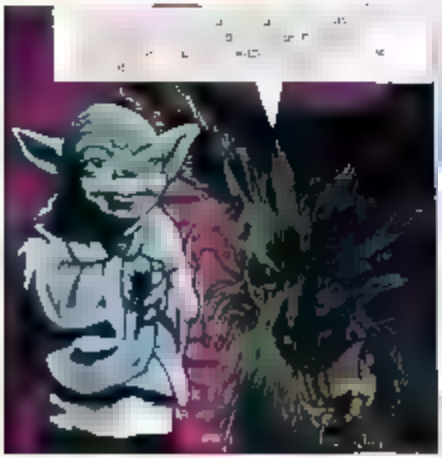
#46 JUNE 83 [illegible] Pages from Marshall Rogers' Batman, Mike Ploog's Werewolf by Night, Bernie Wrightson's Frankenstein, Jeff Jones' Conan, Chaykin and Boltons Wraparounds, Steranko's History of Comics, Starlin's Warlock, Kaluta's Fantastic Four, Colan's Dracula, Gene Colan's Tomb of Dracula, Barry Windsor-Smith's Conan, Berni Wrightson's Swamp Thing, Mike Kaluta's Shadow, Jim Starlin's Captain Marvel, Jeff Jones' Spectre, Neal Adams' Batman, Jack Kirby's Captain America, Steve Ditko's Dr. Strange, Gil Kane's Green Lantern/Green Arrow, Wally Wood's Daredevil, Joe Kubert's Sgt. Rock, Gene Colan's Howard the Duck, Frank Miller's Daredevil, Mike Ploog's Man-Wolf, Jim Steranko's Nick Fury, Barry Smith's Conan, Walt Simonson's Manhunter, Dave Cockrum's Nightcrawler, Chris Claremont's X-Men, Terry Austin's Iron Fist, Howard Chaykin's Cody Starbuck, Jack Kirby's Devil Dinosaur

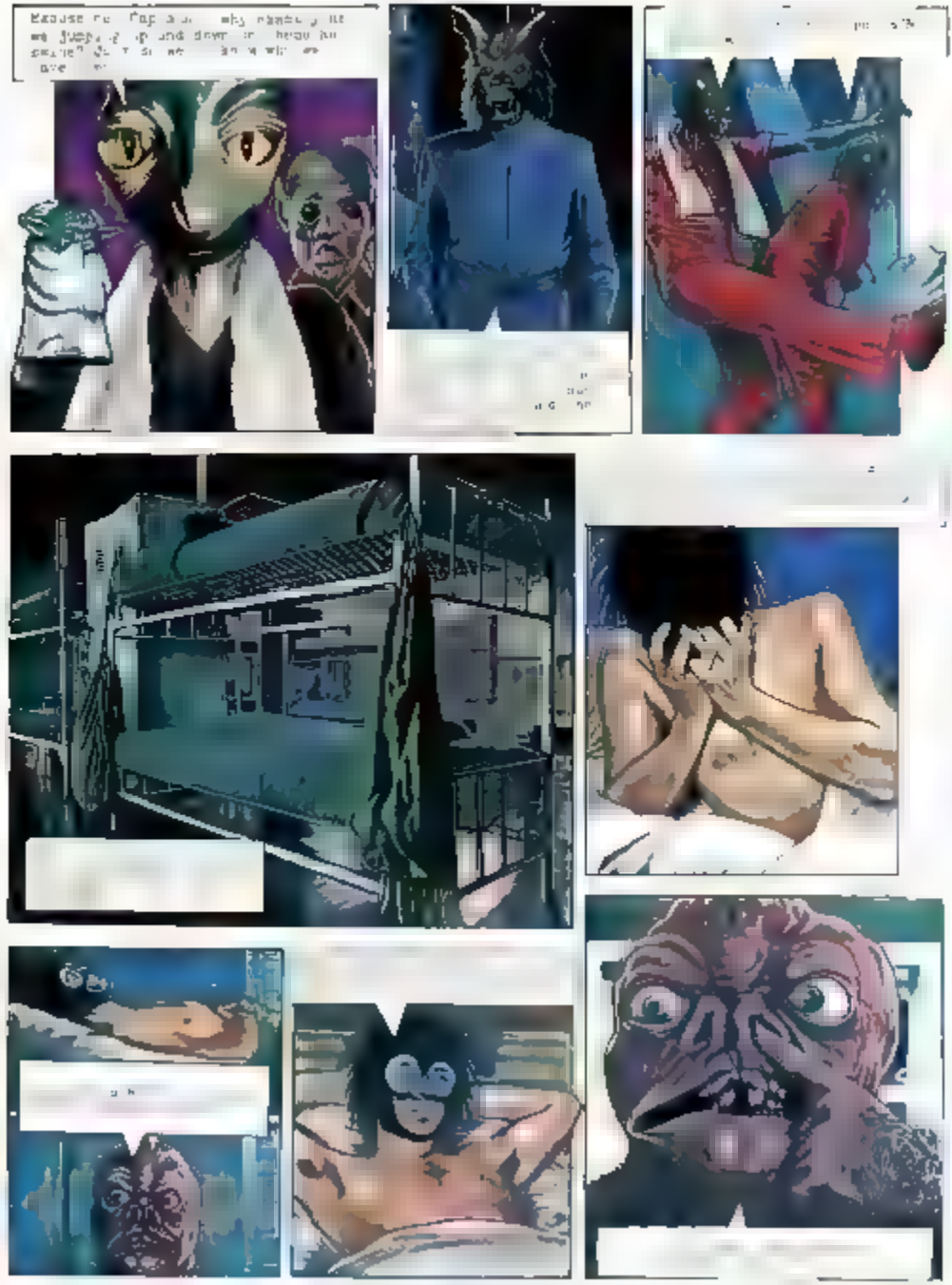
ROCKOE











The worst part of war is the waiting; during the endless of the trip, only Four-Eyes was inclined to discuss pacifism with me--
--So first we blow up the Emperor and his family, and then we hold, you know, really mellowed-out purification trials...
What about you, Marty? Don't you feel funny about butchering innocent sentient beings?
Hey-- who's "Mr. Sensitive" around here, baby?
But seriously, just think of the possibilities-- no entertaining the troops, my own Christmas special, VSO chicks.
All right, quiet down, you miserable COCKROACH DROPPINGS! We jump in 30 seconds.
But, Sargeant-- I don't want to go first! I'm scared!
Shut up, "Bix", and JUMP!
Help!

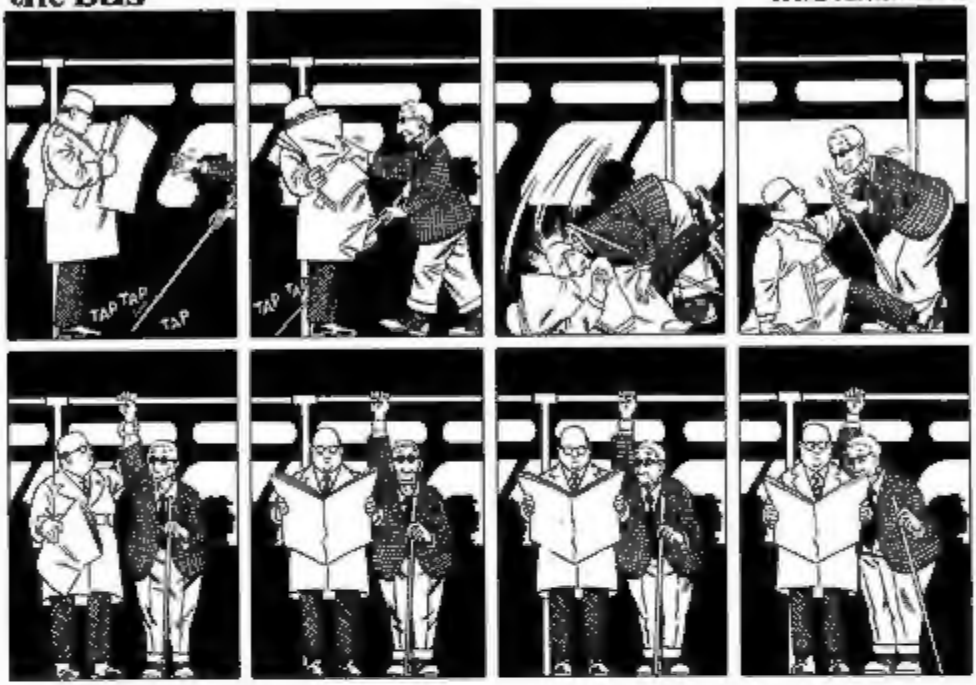
©1983 ROD KIERKEGAARD, JR.

My plastic pod-chute bore me gently toward the ground; the pods of the other Star-guards floated above me in the angry sky.
Down toward the planet of the Mehin we dropped, to unleash upon these tax-evading little creatures all the horrors of war.

To be continued...

the bus

PAUL KIRCHNER ©



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